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# MY MESSENGER.

But the charge retorted, by showing that "comfort" for Jerusalem must be preceded by a preparation of Messiah's way. Is. xl. 1—4.

There must be repentance on man's part, to insure mercy on God's.

He delays His coming in order that there may be time for repentance.

The same proclamation still made.

The heart must be prepared for Christ to take possession of it.

## III. THE RESULT OF THE EXERCISE OF HIS OFFICE.

Two classes to whom this language addressed.

- (1). The murderers who said "Where is the God of judgment?"
- Though practical infidels, they professed great zeal for God.
- Professed to seek the Lord and to delight in His messenger.
- To these the prophet says *text*, and adds v. 2.
- What they so earnestly desired should only prove a terrible calamity. Amos. v. 18.
- Solemn words!—written for our learning.
- In vain we urge you to repent.
- In vain God appeals to you by mercies and judgments.
- Like Felix you tremble, but then grow more hardened.
- Take heed lest the Lord come to His temple and find it only "a den of thieves."

- (2). The patient waiters for the consolation of Israel.

Though He delayed, they still clung to His promise.

Trust many such here.

Accused God of unfaithfulness,—“where is the God of judgment.”  
The text the answer to this accusation.

## I. THE MESSENGER.

As eastern monarch sends his herald before him, so Messiah.  
He did not select an angel.  
The Baptist was a worthy representative of the Majesty of Heaven.

He was no wavering character. Matt. xi. 7.

One intent on fulfilling his commission.

Cared not to render his message palatable to his hearers.

Lived in the desert, but not as a recluse.

Not a courtier, Comp. Esther iv. 2, Amos vii. 12, 13.

Yet his voice made itself heard by king, as well as people.

To all alike, a stern uncompromising witness of the truth.

Yet the Baptist not the only one who fulfilled Malachi's

description.

Malachi himself was one who prepared the way of the Lord.  
In the Baptist the idea of “My Messenger” most perfectly

realized.

Every faithful minister is a messenger.

We need your prayers to prove ourselves faithful.

You need to receive the message with meekness.

Faithful dealing invariably produces pain.

Our duty to preach as “a dying man to dying men.”

Trifle not with the message which says “the Lord is at hand.”

## II. HIS OFFICE.

The Jews were evidently not in a fit state to receive their Messiah.

There needed to be a moral reformation.

They needed to be stripped of their pride and self-righteousness.

While discontented and murmuring under deserved chastisement, they were unfit to hail Messiah.

Expected immediate fulfilment of promises of good made in the latter portion of Isaiah's prophecy.

In their disappointment they charged God with unfaithfulness.







# HOMILETICAL AIDS.





# HOMILETICAL AIDS

FOR THE

## CHRISTIAN YEAR;

A SERIES OF

## OUTLINES OF SERMONS

FOR THE

SUNDAYS AND PRINCIPAL HOLYDAYS OF THE CHURCH  
CALENDAR.

---

*BY A CLERGYMAN.*

---



LONDON :

RICHARD D. DICKINSON, FARRINGDON STREET,  
1875.



## P R E F A C E .

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THESE outlines form the substance of discourses delivered by the Author, during the course of his ministry as a Clergyman of the Church of England. It is obviously a matter of considerable importance that, as far as possible, advantage should be taken of the admirable forethought with which the great circle of Christian doctrine is brought before our congregations in the services of our Church. Additional interest is given to those services, and increased spiritual benefit is likely to be derived by a congregation, when their Minister bases his discourse upon some of the topics brought before their attention in the Epistle, or Gospel, or Lessons for the day. This plan cannot, of course, always be adhered to, but the Author hopes that these outlines may serve occasionally to direct the attention of some of the younger Clergy, or of an overburdened elder Brother, to the forthcoming Sunday services, and furnish him with a few suggestive materials for thought. They make no pretence to originality. The Author has not scrupled to adapt to his purpose whatever he has met with in the course of his reading, bearing upon the subject of his sermon, and he has endeavoured, as far as recol-

lection serves, to direct his readers to the sources of his information. In a few cases it will be seen that the outline is based upon an already published sermon, or upon a chapter in some Theological treatise. Even for this, he conceives, that no apology is needed. Sermons, such as those of Dr. South, for instance, carefully analyzed, and then re-written and delivered to a congregation in the Preacher's own language, would go far to redeem the modern pulpit from the dulness and poverty of thought with which it is too often justly charged. Lord Bacon's *dictum*, that "reading makes a full man," is apt to be overlooked in the present day, when the multifarious duties of a large parish make incessant demands upon a Clergyman's attention, and distract his thoughts from the great work of preparation for the pulpit. At the same time, while alive to the importance of enriching a sermon with the illustrations furnished by human genius and learning, the author trusts it will be seen that in these outlines, his great aim has been to let God's word speak for itself, assured that in setting it forth in all its breadth and fulness and comprehensiveness, it "cannot go forth void."

E. W.

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## ERRATA.

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On page 15, line 11, after "make His paths straight," insert Matt. iii. 3.

- " " 65, " 30, for "Matthew," read "heathen."
- " " 95, " 1, insert III. before SECURITY.
- " " 114, " 32, for "1 Cor. vi. 2," read "2 Cor. vi. 2."
- " " 121, " 17, for "1 Thess. ii. 3," read "1 Thess. iv. 3."
- " " 193, " 18, for "James i. 26," read "James i. 25."
- " " 241, " 23, for "Luke v. 2," read "Luke xv. 2."
- " " 278, " 4, for "Rom.," read "Kings."
- " " 282, " 31, for "1 Cor. x. i. 4," read "1 Cor. x. 1—4."



# HOMILETICAL AIDS

FOR THE

## CHRISTIAN YEAR.

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### THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION AND DUTY.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand ; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."—Rom. xiii. 12.

Second advent of Christ great theme of Christian hope.  
His first coming longed for, even by the heathen.  
When He came, a faithful few welcomed Him.  
But He came only to depart, promising to come again.  
For the fulfilment of that promise the Church watches.  
Christian hope excited by events which seem to correspond  
with what Christ foretold should be signs of His coming.  
Yet, scoffers still cry, "Where is the promise of His coming?"  
But the Church knows His promise will be fulfilled.  
Recognizes in text her present position and duty.

### I. OUR PRESENT POSITION.

To estimate force of these words, place ourselves in  
Apostle's position.  
Writing to Christians writhing under persecution.  
Jewish fanaticism and heathen superstition arrayed against  
them.  
"The Christians to the lions" ever ringing in their ears.  
How eagerly look for cessation of such a night.  
Long for time when fulfilled. Isaiah lx. 18.  
In Christ's death and resurrection they found key to explain  
prophecy.  
Their hopes strengthened by what already saw fulfilled.

Rejoice in confirmation of their hope furnished by this Epistle.

Europe greatly changed since then.

Christianity has established itself.

Point out benefits it has conferred on mankind.

Compare society now with that of Pagan Rome, and may we not say, "the night is past, the day has dawned?"

But other considerations contradict this.

What is the real condition of world now? Eph. vi. 12.

Darkness the element congenial to it.

Education and science may foretell "a good time coming," but this doomed world is shrouded in a moral night.

Yes, its doom is pronounced. 2 Pet. iii. 10.

That sentence confirmed by men's own acts. John iii. 19.

Desire continuance of darkness, as the thief. Job xxiv. 17.

What a melancholy picture of the world.

But the Apostle says this is fast coming to an end.

Destruction shrunk from by organized beings.

Worldly persons cannot contemplate world's end without a pang.

But disturbs not serenity of believer's confidence.

Before it is to take place, prophecy points to terrible convulsions.

War between France and Germany. Overthrow of Papacy.

Seem to stand at close of 1260 days.

Think of solemn events immediately to follow.

"The day is at hand."

## II. OUR DUTY ARISING OUT OF IT.

Such a day can afford no satisfaction to sinners.

Slaves of rulers of darkness, doing works of darkness.

We charged to put off these. What are they?

Evil works, fruit of corrupt minds.

Works wrought from impulse of self interest, having no reference to God's glory.

Nearness of eternity should operate as motive for increased purity.

Lusts of flesh are the night dress of world.

An indecency about them.

As subject going to Sovereign's levee, careful of his dress, so *text.*

Scripture represents the Christian as a Warrior.

Armour not worn in time of peace.



The sinner it is that is unarmed.

Satan is armed, but "his goods are in peace," lulled by opiates.

Not so with those who have been taught "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Need armour against devil, world, and their own hearts.

Need it too for attack.

As Christians without excuse if not buckled on armour.

Charge to us is, Josh. i. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 1.

Eminently need armour now. 2 Tim. iii. 1.

Is not truth despised and falsehood rampant?

Is not commerce too often a gigantic system of deceit?

Even Clergymen guilty of pitiful evasions, traitors to articles.

In danger of being carried away by the lax morality of present day.

Our profession of Christianity must be no lip service.

Warnings loud and frequent of Master's approach.

Faith's ear, with awful, still delight,  
Counts them like minute bells at night,  
Keeping the heart awake till dawn of morn,  
While to her funeral pile this aged world is borne.\*

Be it ours to be up and doing.

### THE ALARM BELL.

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."—Rom. xiii. 11.

Paul's aim, "to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

Shunned not to declare "all the counsel of God."

Insisted on cultivation of every Christian grace and virtue.

Duties of the Christian as a member of a family and as a subject of a kingdom.

As subjects of Christ, not absolved from obedience to lawfully constituted civil authority.

God the author of peace, for whose maintenance civil rulers appointed, v. 7.

Proceeds further, v. 8. Well if this were obeyed.

Then follow words of *text*.

\* Keble's Christian Year, First Sunday in Advent.

# I. THE INJUNCTION, "Awake out of sleep."

"Now." The present ever insisted on in Scripture.  
 "Now is the accepted time," "To-day if ye will hear His voice."  
 So "now" while God's voice calls, door of mercy open, influences of Spirit afforded.  
 But why urge this on us who are wide awake?  
 Such a remonstrance may be made (1) by worldling (2) by believer.

## (1). Worldly man awake to material interests.

But is not this an evidence that you are fast asleep?  
 While unconverted, it is dark night with you.  
 A sad state truly, yet you perceive it not.  
 Busy with worldly projects, yet these are mere shadows, the dreams of a sleeping man.  
 The dreamer persuaded he is engaged in a real transaction.  
 Sometimes suspects it is a dream, but not convinced till he wakes.  
 So you have occasional secret misgivings.  
 Now then *text*, leave off building castles in the air.  
 You are animated by false hopes, &c., Is. xxix. 8.  
 Awake, for the Lord is at hand.

## (2). Believers, it may be said, have no need of such an alarm bell.

Even you too prone to fall into stupor.  
 Christ complains of drowsiness of His people's affections.  
 He wants *all* their love.  
 Seasons of coldness and languor occur.  
 Manifested in a spirit of formalism.  
 In lukewarmness in the cause of Christ, not as Ps. lxix. 9.  
 In negligent performance of duty.  
 In indolent compliance with the world.  
 In impatience of remonstrance, Prov. vi. 10.  
 Caused by unmortified body of sin.  
 Sometimes by cares of world, &c.  
 Sometimes from neglect of spiritual exercises.  
 Sometimes by careless attendance on means of grace.  
 But from whatever cause, injunction of *text* clear.

A sleepy frame of mind brings leanness on the soul.  
 2 John, 8. As a ship wrecked within sight of port.  
 This injunction enforced by two considerations.

### FIRST CONSIDERATION.

"It is high time to awake out of sleep."  
 No longer a time of ignorance for God to wink at.  
 Not left like the heathen to feel after God.  
 Christ has fully revealed the Father.  
 "Knowing the time," you lay yourself under penalty if  
 you neglect so great salvation.  
 Now in Advent season especially called to awake.  
 Primitive Christians lived in daily expectation of Christ's  
 advent.  
 Eighteen hundred years elapsed, and yet the promise is  
 "surely I come quickly."  
 Shall it be said of us, "We know not the time?" Nay,  
 shall we not rejoice as signs of His immediate advent  
 are multiplied?  
 There are signs of a glorious dawn, though sadly overcast  
 by clouds.  
 Be it ours to hail rising of Sun of Righteousness.  
 Be it ours to welcome tokens of coming Lord.  
 Be it ours to stand, as Jewish priests, with silver trumpets  
 to sound the year of jubilee.  
 Yes, it is near at hand, the chariot of the king is ready  
 harnessed.

### SECOND CONSIDERATION. "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Another form of the same thought just considered.  
 Day by day, nearer our journey's end.  
 It should stimulate us to more strenuous efforts.  
 Desire of Christian to be accepted by Christ at the great day.  
 Work of grace now begun will then be consummated.  
 When that day will come we are not told, but every day  
 lessens distance.  
 Ours to stand in an attitude of watchful expectation.

## THE TWO SERVANTS.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrite; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."—Matt. xxiv. 45–51.

To-day, the commencement of the Ecclesiastical year.

Called to watch for Christ's second advent, as Jews for first. Predictions of His advent at some specified date, have been again and again falsified, yet Habak. ii. 3.

At that advent there will be two classes described in *text*.

Here Christ mentions signs of destruction of Jerusalem and of His second advent.

The two events combined—obvious parallel between them.

The former a consequence of blindness of rulers of Israel.

A warning therefore to rulers of the Christian Church.

1 Pet. iv. 17.

An appeal to the disciples as the first pastors, v. 45.

But applicable to all Christians.

Consider contrast between faithful and wicked servant.

## I. IN THEIR SPIRIT.

Faithful servant impressed with a sense of his responsibility.

Prepared to subscribe to Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

This quickened by prospect of nearness of second advent.

One great purpose of that coming is to reward. Isaiah xl. 10.

Hope of reward animates believer. Heb. xi. 26.

Lives under impression that He may come at any moment.

Wicked servant throws off all sense of responsibility.

"God is not in all his thoughts"—result of evil heart of unbelief.

Still keeps up appearance of conformity to the Divine will.

Like the fool he wishes there were no God. Ps. liii. 1.

Does not deny that He will come, but that "He delayeth," v. 48.

A pregnant hint, like ch. xxv. 5, 19.

But he assumes that His coming is indefinitely postponed.

He speaks in a tone of internal mocking frivolity.  
 A tone also of sarcastic bitterness, like Elijah's, 1 Kings,  
 xviii. 27.  
 Alas! how many such in the present day. 2 Pet. iii, 3, 4.

## II. IN THEIR ACTS.

Their actions proceed from spirit by which they are animated.

Servant's duty to carry out master's instructions.

The faithful servant intended for our imitation.

We have each a talent committed to our keeping.

On the constant outlook for opportunities to do Him service.

But unbelief will manifest itself in the conduct.

The course of sin proverbially downhill.

Whispered suggestions of evil parleyed with instead of being dismissed.

So here, the thought grows into a settled conviction.

Unprincipled in his behaviour (1) to those in the Church and (2) those out of it.

(1). He smites his fellow-servants.

Though a servant, he lords it over God's heritage.

History witnesses to the fulfilment of this prophecy.

How constantly is the despotic, overbearing conduct manifested.

Instead of Phil. ii. 4, they say, I insist on my right.

"Pay me that thou owest," forgetting that the Lord stands in the background.

(2). He eats and drinks with the drunken.

He breaks down moral barriers—makes all drunkards welcome.

The line of demarcation between the Church and the world thus reduced to a vanishing point.

Hearts of righteous saddened, while the world cries, Jer. vii. 4.

Note how all this acted out by Church of Rome, in persecution of the Vaudois, &c., and in system of indulgences.

## III. IN THEIR RECOMPENSE.

Verses 46, 47. He is blessed in every way.

Blessed in his deed, enjoying peaceful conscience.

Love the root and source of his faithfulness.

As soldier expects death on field of battle, so believer his  
Lord in field of service.

Faithfulness never loses its reward. Ch. xxv. 23.

As Joseph's faithfulness rewarded, so believer's.

Verses 50, 51. His Lord's advent will be his confusion.

Incredulity does not retard the march of events.

Needs some more novel mode of awakening his dormant  
faculties.

Judicial blindness has sealed his eyes.

He shall be "dichotomized,"—the theocratic punishment.

1 Sam. xv. 33.\*

Suits one who in life sundered his conscience and his  
practice.

Think of these things.

From year to year the signs of wrath  
Are gathering round the judge's path.

He *now* waits to be gracious.

## THE DESIGN OF THE SCRIPTURES.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our  
learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might  
have hope."—Rom. xv. 4.

God's loving kindness seen in provision made for man's wel-  
fare.

Evidenced in world which he inhabits.

Evidenced in the work of redemption.

Evidenced in the Bible.

He has made it an attractive book.

It contains histories, prophecies, biographies, &c., &c.

No part of it is unprofitable for *text*.

## I. THE DESIGN FOR WHICH THE SCRIPTURES WERE WRITTEN.

By nature man is ignorant of God, and of the source of  
happiness.

Yet he is impelled to seek after Him.

\* Stier, vol. iii. p. 303.

The human mind capable of wonderful achievements.  
 Yet not even the genius of an Aristotle or a Plato could  
 enable them to find out God.  
 But God has revealed Himself in His word.  
 Employed human instruments to write it.  
 Contains more precious truth than mere secular learning can  
 furnish.  
 The brilliant productions of heathen antiquity are cold,  
 dead truths.

“ Their rules of life  
 Defective and unsanctioned, proved too weak  
 To bind the roving appetite, and lead  
 Blind nature to a God not yet revealed.  
 'Tis Revelation satisfies all doubts,  
 Explains all mysteries, except her own,  
 And so illuminates the path of life  
 That fools discover it, and stray no more.”\*

Neither ancient philosophy nor modern science can supply  
 what man needs.  
 The Bible gives this, and also has furnished impetus to  
 modern enlightenment and progress.  
 This the great source of the inspiration of men like Bacon,  
 Locke, &c.  
 This Book adapted for all classes.  
 It abounds in histories of individuals.  
 These shew that human nature remains ever the same.  
 Their chequered histories beacons for us.  
 It must be read so that its precepts may be engraved on  
 heart.  
 He who does so possesses an unfailing safeguard.  
 Psalm cxix. 11. Bringing into chamber of his heart, like  
 Cant. iii. 4.  
 As an artist studies some masterpiece of antiquity so we  
 must study Bible.

## II. THE PARTICULAR GRACE WHICH THEY FOSTER.

Hope one of the most precious gifts given to man.  
 Effects of sin are visible everywhere  
 Take hope away and the world would be insupportable.  
 But it is especially needful for the future life.  
 Imagine an intelligent heathen bewailing death of a dearly  
 loved friend.

\* Cowper.

But Scripture points to Christ, 2 Tim. i. 10.

Mark the peace visible on countenance of that dying pauper.

Hope gilds the prospect beforehand.

Again it kindles hope in guilty, condemned consciences.

It tells us of an exalted Jesus—and of His Second Advent.

Thus hope, like spire of majestic cathedral.

Causes us to soar like the lark, above dark clouds of sorrow.

Proves the sweetest companion in house of pilgrimage.

### III. THE MEANS BY WHICH THEY FOSTER HOPE.

#### (1) By Teaching Patience.

The believer has often "need of patience."

Bible explains the mystery of God's chastisements.

Tells of the splendid triumphs won by suffering Saints of old.

Points to the great Captain of our Salvation. Heb. ii. 10.

Thus rejoices in affliction.

Thus patience sweetens bitter waters, like Exod. xv. 25.,  
and transforms Valley of Achor into door of hope.

#### (2) By Infusing Consolation.

See mother comforting her child—so Is. lxvi. 13.

How efficacious the comfort Jesus supplies for the woes of manhood.

Paul knew its soothing power, Phil. ii. 12.

It converts a prison into a temple of praise, Acts xvi. 25.

To the doubting, sorrowful heart Jesus whispers, Is. xlv. 21.

The message still is, Is. xl. 1, and rendered effective by Holy Spirit, Rom. viii. 17.

Thus believer animated for fresh conflicts.

How much need then to study the Scriptures.

Ask for Holy Spirit to throw light on sacred page.



## THE PRIVILEGES OF CHRISTIANS.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."—Romans xv. 13.

A spirit of bigotry and contention seems natural to man.

Seen in our Lord's disciples, Luke ix. 49.

Seen in effort to restrict spiritual blessings to a particular sect.

This spirit distracted the primitive church—cause of the Council of Jerusalem.

A spirit to which early Jewish converts much addicted.

But a spirit opposed to the teaching of Christ.

Paul protests against it here in preceding verses.

Christ the connecting link, uniting Jew and Gentile.

Here he solemnly prays for both, *text*.

## I. THE PRIVILEGES OF TRUE CHRISTIANS.

Well to consider these from time to time.

Christians too apt to live below their privileges.

Here Apostle enumerates three privileges.

(1). *Joy*, from a sense of pardoned sin.

The world denies this, but believers have realized it.

A guilty conscience removed—God apprehended as a Father.

Consciousness of deliverance from evil, always a source of joy.

Thus the lame man in the temple, Acts iii. 8.

So Christians animated by Spirit of Spouse, Cant. iii. 4.

A joy differing widely from wordly mirth, Prov. xiv. 13.

This enjoyed till they "enter into joy of their Lord."

(2). *Peace*, from conviction of Christ's all sufficiency.

Isaiah xxvi. 3.

A peace springing from righteousness wrought out.

The legacy of Christ to His Church, John xiv. 27.

Includes all promised and purchased good.

(3). *Hope*, from assurance of future happiness.

Unlike worldly hope in the security of its foundation, and the certainty of its fruition.

The helmet which preserves him invulnerable in time of conflict.

The anchor which binds him fast to the Eternal shore.

A flame which storms cannot extinguish.

## II. THE METHOD BY WHICH THEY ARE TO BE OBTAINED.

### (1). From God as their Fountain.

"The God of hope," what a glorious title !

True, He is also a jealous God.

This truth needed to be impressed on ancient Israel.

We also need to remember it.

But He is also the God of hope, raising expectations.

In the gift of His Son He has given pledge of His willingness to withhold nothing, 1 Pet. i. 3.

Assurance also of His willingness to receive sinners.

Encouragement to come to God.

Blessings waiting for our acceptance.

Come to Him, as "a rewarder of them that seek Him."

### (2). By Faith as the means.

By faith we receive fulness of Christ.

As infants draw milk from mother's breast, so we draw grace from Christ.

We must *believe* that God has good in store for us.

In *believing*, the God of hope fills with joy and peace.

### (3). Through the Holy Ghost as the Agent.

No less power can produce these things.

Joy, peace, and hope proceed from God, Zech, iv. 6.

Regeneration the work of the Spirit of Truth.

Meetness for glory His work also.

May He thus exert influence on our souls.

## THE OPENING OF THE BOOKS.

"The books were opened."—Rev. xx. 12.

Awe inspiring scene depicted, v. 11—13.

Events tending onwards steadily to that great consummation.

Bible ever keeps in view prospect of a Day of Judgment.

Furnishes us with particulars respecting it.

Reasonableness of the doctrine assented to by intelligent minds.

Conscience binds men over to future just judgment of Almighty.

God's attribute of Omniscience waits for its vindication.

His power, wisdom, love, justice have been magnified.

But as yet no sufficient theatre for display of His Omniscience.

That reserved for day of judgment, for then *text*.

Description, based on proceedings of earthly courts of justice.

Not that God needs to refer to written records.

But to show equity and justice of His decisions.

This seen if we consider what are "the books."

## **I. THE BOOK OF GOD'S REMEMBRANCE, in other words His OMNISCIENCE.**

The great Day Book in which is posted up all that occurs.

Ungodly men argue, God does not trouble Himself to take note of every trivial action.

By this they have in all ages silenced the upbraidings of conscience.

So Jews in Amos' day, but mark how God replies, Amos viii. 7.

But believers find comfort in His remembering. Heb. vi. 10.

Written records kept of matters of importance, Esther ii. 23, and vi. 1.

So God is represented as acting, Mal. iii. 16.

Their good deeds, like the alms of Cornelius, registered.

At the last that book shall be opened.

## **II. THE BOOK OF THE LAW.**

God has given His creatures a fixed rule of conduct.

He gave the law on Sinai.

He has since made clearer revelations of His will.

The Bible furnishes full information on the subject of human salvation.

It sets forth God's holiness and man's depravity.

It sets forth the worthlessness of the sinner's obedience, and the sufficiency of Christ's.

This book will be opened.

The ungodly may now read their sentence in it, Rom. ii. 8, 9.

But self-love prevents their seeing this.

They twist the scriptures to their own destruction.  
 Hence the world is charitable and tolerant where God is stern and uncompromising.  
 But how different will it be when the books are opened.  
 Then God's truth will pierce with incisive power, Jude 15.  
 Then "venial" offences will appear to be damning sins.  
 What relation does the Bible now bear to you ?  
 To be ignorant of it is no excuse.  
 Make it your daily companion and guide.

### III. THE BOOK OF CONSCIENCE.

A censor which everyone carries about with him.  
 The tribunal which God has set up in the human soul.  
 The verdict of conscience will, as a rule, correspond with declaration of God's word, Rom. ii. 14, 15.  
 Man has a moral sense—a power to distinguish right from wrong.  
 But conscience is easily silenced and dethroned.  
 The hardened criminal has gagged it.  
 Others allow passion and prejudice to pervert it.  
 With all, its action is momentary, the pain of its rebuke passes away.  
 But its verdict will be brought forward again, when *text*.  
 Its writing can be deciphered by no human eye.  
 But like writing with juice of lemon, the fire will disclose it, comp. 1 Cor. iii. 13.  
 It is said no impression made on the sensorium ever obliterated.  
 Association will recall events long since forgotten.  
 In asphyxia it is said events of past life flash before the dying man.\*  
 What is this but *text*—how terrible the register !  
 God's warning to thoughtless sinners is, "Be sure your sin will find you out."  
 Deal carefully with this faithful monitor.

### IV. THE BOOK OF LIFE.—Read whole verse.

Here names of elect are registered.  
 An honour surpassing every other, Luke x. 20.  
 The Lamb's book of life.  
 A comforting promise made, Rev. iii. 5.

\* See Dr. Forbes Winslow's "Obscure Diseases of the Brain and of the Mind."

How many a desponding believer would breathe freely if only assured of this.

What honour and dignity can be compared to it?

How terrible the consequences if not entered in it, v. 15.

Make sure of this all important point.

If you are living in sin your name is not written there.

If you are clinging in childlike faith to Christ, it is.

### THE HARBINGER.

“For this is He that was spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.”

Ministry of John Baptist excited attention.

Link in broken succession of prophets, of whom Jews so proud.

His birth and early years intimated that he would assume no mean rank in prophetic order.

No wonder impulse urged people to go to hear him.

Regarded as reviver of theocracy.

Convinced, sent by God, not only from peculiarities of birth, but from intensity of purpose.

“No reed shaken with wind.”

### HIS WORK.

Messenger of Jehovah, had painful office, Jer. xv. 10.

His message styled, “burden of Lord.”

So John; no complimentary language; “repent.”

Pilgrims required to submit to rite of baptism.

Camp of Israel theoretically holy, now deteriorated.

John's mission to tear off veil, thus enforcing what older prophets said, Hag. ii. 13, 14.

To shew Israel's need of purifying process to fit for reception of King.

King at hand, therefore voice heard, *text*.

### NATURE OF MESSAGE.

Prophet's tidings painful, not from disposition of sender, but from spiritual condition of those to whom sent.

God's purpose of grace, but depraved condition made sternness necessary.

This prophecy no exception, though really one of glad tidings.  
 Yet his language discloses painful duty, Isaiah xl. 4.  
 Prejudices to be uprooted, pride humbled, wills subdued,  
 slumberers aroused, fan of God's judgment to be applied,  
 &c.

#### **APPLICATION TO PRESENT.**

Christ ever coming.

Cry reiterated in every age, "prepare," &c.

##### **(1). Heart lifted up must be abased by Repentance.**

Pride a barrier to Saviour's entrance.

Self-complacency disqualifies for subjects of His spiritual kingdom.

So Jews. Baptist saw obstacles.

Formalism, hypocrisy, pride of ancestry, selfishness, &c., these must be levelled.

Strange so infatuated.

Even John, no reformer, though crowds flocked.

Heart of nation untouched, would not prepare, doom sealed.

Their fate proves that "preparation of heart from Lord."

John, only "a voice," of itself powerless.

God reserves authority to make voice felt "in demonstration of spirit and power."

Yet works by human instrumentality, so that appeal, Jer. xxiii. 29.

With word in hand, declare Christ and you strangers, so long as unhumbled.

"I came not to call righteous."

Only when conscience quickened by Holy Spirit man feels self a sinner.

Only when humbled receive fulfilment of Isaiah lxvi. 2.

Only when sensible of guilt flee to city of refuge.

Till then only "name to live by."

How many such! Any here?

May voice bow hearts as of old, 2 Sam. xix. 14.

##### **(2). Heart abased must be uplifted by Faith.**

Some few in Israel mourning, for whom Baptist a message of comfort, "Behold Lamb of God."

Of these some treasured up message, watched Jesus, enrolled selves as His disciples.

Of sources of sorrow none so depressing as conviction of sin.  
 Veil of deceit torn from eyes.  
 Conscience charges with offences, so that cry, Ps. li. 4.  
 Saul of Tarsus when waiting for Ananias.  
 One who can say, Ps. xl. 12, prepared to receive Saviour,  
 but to do so heart must be uplifted by faith.  
 For sense of unworthiness overpowering—too vile for mercy.  
 But Herald proclaims, "every valley exalted."  
 "Him that cometh unto me."

### 3. **Wavering heart must be summoned to spiritual decision of life.**

No tortuous policy, no timid wavering, no lukewarm adhesion will suffice.  
 Whatever pardonable for times of ignorance, now day of decision.  
 Lord at hand, therefore, "make paths straight."  
 Thus John acted as Elias, 1 Kings xviii. 21.  
 Exigency of times demanded minds to be made up.  
 Do we not need the same injunction?  
 How seldom see real earnestness.  
 Like borderers in debatable land, how many to-day all for Christ, to-morrow for world.  
 How seldom ask, "what doing for Christ."  
 Be in earnest; "the Lord is at hand."  
 Popery and infidelity; faith in Scripture shaken.  
 Vague generalities substituted for distinctive doctrinal teaching—attention to forms and ceremonies.  
 Spirit of worldliness.  
 Signs of nearness of King.  
 On which side will you stand in day of His appearing?

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### DEATH AND ITS CONQUEROR.

"He will swallow up death in victory."—Is. xxv. 8.

O wonderful announcement!  
 Doubly comforting when fears excited by picture in previous chapter.  
 Ruler of the universe coming forth out of His place.  
 When foundations cast down, a call for interference of king.  
 Fitting portion of Scripture for season of Advent.

Christ's coming terrible to ungodly. Ch. xxiv.  
 Here turn to a world regenerated and purified.  
 Prophecy fulfilled at first advent, but more so at second.  
 Tells of spread of Gospel feast, of removal of veil, then  
*text.*

## I. DEATH.

A word of terrible import.  
 A king described by Milton,

"Black it stood as Night  
 Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,  
 And shook a dreadful dart; what seemed his head  
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

This world affords much enjoyment, "but the trail of the  
 serpent is over it all."

Death reigns supreme.

"The Autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the Winter's  
 cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the Spring brings flowers to strew  
 our hearse, and the Summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon  
 our graves." \*

Flowers have their time to fall,  
 And leaves to wither in the North winds breath,  
 And stars to set—but all,  
 Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death !"

Man ever going to his long home.

Death the wages of sin.

Power of death displays itself in many fearful forms.

Affects not merely bodies, but also souls of men.

Sinner "dead while he liveth."

He is dead in conscience.

He is dead in trespasses and sins, comp. Rom. vii. 24.

He is a slave wearing the livery of death. Ps. xiv. 3.

His throat, heart, life, are sepulchres. Rom. iii. 13, Matt.  
 xxiii. 27, Heb. vi. 1.

If disease precursor of temporal death, what shall we say  
 of these?

Such the condition of too many professing Christians.

Are you under the power of this death?

If so, are you not secretly conscious you are not in your  
 rightful position?

\* Jeremy Taylor, in Pilkington's Spiritual Garland.

† Mrs. Hemans.



Reign of death proves that law of our being is violated.\*  
The atmosphere of this world evidently not congenial  
element.

Every domestic bereavement, &c., proves that we are not in  
the state for which designed.

We want to regain our true footing, but prey helpless to  
rescue itself.

As "prisoners of hope" turn to view Conqueror of Death.

## II. THE CONQUEROR OF DEATH.

True power characterized by calmness and self-possession.  
See this exhibited in Christ.

Witness the gate of Nain. Luke vii. 14.

Prepared for conflict with death as one alive to the power  
of foe.

His calmness before the mob, Luke xxii. 53, before Pilate and  
Herod, and on the cross, John xix. 28.

His calmness in the hour of victory evidenced by state of  
sepulchre. John xx. 5-7.

Imparted calmness to agitated disciples after resurrec-  
tion.

Each appearance of Christ to His disciples a command like,  
Josh. x. 24.

Gazing on Christ's risen body they could say, 1 Cor. xv. 55.

Yes, the resurrection of Jesus is the death of death.

Lazarus and others died again. But, Rom. vi. 9, 10.

In this his people share—faith points to dead raised incor-  
ruptible.

In this apostle finds fulfilment of *text*. 1 Cor. xv. 54.

A resurrection the only real victory over death.†

You may brave death, but you cannot conquer it by doing  
so.

As we watch sinking sufferer, we feel victory to be on side of  
death.

But faith sees more clearly, for body only temporarily sub-  
ject, as Jesus in Joseph's tomb, and promise, Is. xxvi. 19.

"Earth to earth," &c., not knell of hope, for grave the gate  
of glory.

Taught two important lessons :

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption, p. 27. (W. Hunt & Co.)

† Robertson's Sermon on 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57, Vol. III.

**1. A lesson of Duty for Christian Workers.**

If felt Christ's quickening power ourselves, we must desire to impart it to others.

As with human body, 1 Cor. xii. 26, so with the Church.

Christ's charge to His fellow labourers. Is. lxii. 6, 7.

Our aim to make His voice penetrate sepulchres, that dead come forth like Lazarus, to prove *text*.

**2. A lesson of comfort for Christian Mourners.**

Dismal blank felt after death's invasion of home.

But look up with joy to think our dear ones still live.

One family we dwell in Him,  
One Church above, beneath.  
Though now divided by the stream,  
The narrow stream of death.

That stream seems to grow narrower, as faith acquires strength.

When see believer sink into rest, feel death to be conquered.

Exhibit calmness, serenity, confidence.

For them we need have no concern, but for ourselves much.

Looking to Jesus with a steadfast eye,  
Clad in His righteousness my robe divine;  
Come, for thy boasted terrors I defy,  
Poor harmless, shadowy phantom! *He* is mine.  
My life is bound in His, whose living word  
Cries that the dead are blest, when dying in the Lord.

**THE CHASTENED CHRISTIAN'S VOW.**

"O Lord our God, other Lords beside Thee have had dominion over us; but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name.—Isaiah xxvi. 13.

The grace of God looks backward to pardon and forward to provide.

God never works by halves.

With manifestation of God's grace corresponds nature of man's duty.

"He will cease to do evil and learn to do well."

Only this combination issued in Salvation.

Take up language of *text*,

Song of praise for the latter days.

Prophet describes banquet spread, death destroyed, and

Christ's advent welcomed. Is. xxv. 9.

This even now fulfilled in experience of God's people.

They dwell in "a strong city" where defy foe.

No longer guilty sinners but sanctified children, can say,  
 Ps. xcv. 1.  
 But if we are heirs, let us not forget unworthiness.  
 As we review the past and forecast future say—*text*.

## I. A RETROSPECTIVE ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

Israel ever prone to rebel.  
 In captivity learned mistake they had made.  
 Imitated idolatrous practices of heathen.  
 God permitted them to be their own masters. 2 Chron.  
 xii. 8.  
 Compelled to serve enemies in hunger, thirst, &c.  
 But had God cast off his people?  
 Nay they had cast Him off. Is. lii. 3.  
 Instead of anthems of praise, din of cymbals, shouts of  
 revellers, complaints of women. Ezek. viii. 14.  
 Instead of sacrifices to Jehovah, gesticulations of Baal's  
 priests.  
 Instead of one true God, Lords many and Gods many, *text*.  
 Observe confession made in furnace of affliction.  
 Compare chap. xxiv. 17–20 and reason given v. 5.  
 With God's elect this answers end designed.  
 Like David before Nathan's visit, they were in a self-  
 satisfied state.  
 But now awakened to sense of guilt.  
 Conscious of their sin exciting God's displeasure, as 1 Kings  
 xvii. 18.  
 Now their Head interposes for their deliverance.  
 Sense of freeness of His forgiving love extorts confession,  
*text*.

How has it been with you?  
 Have not your lusts been your lords?  
 Look around and see does Jesus maintain supremacy?  
 One has made lucre his God.  
 Another makes honour his master passion.  
 Another gives himself up to pleasure.  
 History full of records of shipwrecks in voyage of life.  
 Let us look narrowly into own hearts, *text*.  
 Alas, some may use stronger language and say, "Other  
 Lords *without* thee, &c."  
 Become practical atheists.  
 Laboured to exclude God from thoughts.

Idols crowd heart, like inn at Bethlehem.  
 But if not quite so low, can we refuse to say, *text*.  
 "My son give me thine heart," yet what shuffling and  
 evading!  
 Like Saul we "spare Agag, and the best of the sheep."  
 Thus ours a divided heart, so that we cannot forsake all to  
 follow Christ.  
 But in dividing, world secures first and largest share.  
 We may well confess with shame, *text*.

## II. A PROSPECTIVE DETERMINATION. *Text*.

Happy for Israel had they kept true to this.  
 Even the heathen worship a Supreme Being.  
 Multiplied inferior deities to represent His omnipresence.  
 Clothed them with material forms, but professed to worship  
 no image but Deity represented by it.  
 The sin of Jeroboam and of Roman Catholic Church.  
 Now taught by discipline, obey charge, Ex. xxiii. 13, and  
 make promise, *text*.  
 So we must forget things behind.  
 People of God make mention of His name, Ps. lxxxix. 16.  
 Acknowledge selves His subjects and servants.  
 So we, not with lip service, but with heart and life.  
 May we thus be enabled to say, *text*.  
 Yet knowledge of deceitful hearts causes misgivings.  
 We walk over half hardened lava of volcano.  
 Souls torn with violence of struggles.  
 Let us not be disheartened, but fight till able to say, v. 14.  
 Submit to no compromise, as Joshua with Gibeonites, but  
 hew Agag in pieces before Lord.  
 What saith Church by the prophet, v. 12.  
 Need grace to know helplessness, v. 12, *last clause*.  
 Need grace to know Christ, v. 12, *first clause*.  
 Look to Him for strength.  
 He has made peace, so that you have boldness.  
 In His strength register your vow and say, *text*.

## SPIRITUAL JOY.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say rejoice."—Phil. iv. 4.

Alford says this command forms ground tone of whole epistle.

Paul ever reverts to this as natural expression of Christian feeling.

At this time he had reason to be cast down, i. 16.

But he resolves to rejoice, i. 18.

Desires to impart joy to Philippians i. 25, 26.

Again, ii. 17, 18 ; iii. 1—serving as fresh starting-point.

Does this refer to former letter, alluded to by Polycarp ?

No, but to this duty of *text*, which will preserve from false confidence of the "concision."

Then in *text* he once more reverts to it.

## I. THE DUTY INCULCATED. "Rejoice."

Joy and sorrow intermingled in human experience.

For Christians a large measure of sorrow appointed.

Such at least the opinion of the world.

Considers Christ an austere fanatic and appeals to Luke vi. 21, 25.

Some sincere believers confirm this forbidding view of Christianity.

But is this a just representation of it ?

We admit, believers know what "godly sorrow" means.

They ever offer the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart.

If you have not learned this, you are those spoken of in Luke vi. 25.

For yours the sinful laughter of the world.

The cross must be borne in some form or other.

Yet there is a joy with which "no stranger intermeddleth."  
2 Cor. vi. 10.

This joy proclaims world's view of religion to be a libel. *Text*.

The exercise of this joy enforced as a duty.

Joy the sensation of delight experienced in the acquisition of good.

"Good" depends on ideas the mind forms of what constitutes it.

This joy one of the "fruits of the Spirit." Rom. xiv. 17.

Arises from a sense of interest in Christ.  
 Contrast worldly and spiritual joy. Ps. iv. 7.  
 Imperfect apprehension of Christ and His gospel produces  
 sternness and moroseness.  
 Black is not the colour of heaven. Matt. vi. 16.  
 As rays from the light-house rejoice hearts of storm-tossed  
 mariners so *text*.

## II. THE NATURE OF THIS JOY. "In the Lord."

The world's joy is sordid, grovelling, intermittent.  
 But believer's joy enhanced by testimony of Word, and by  
 experience of grace.  
 He rejoices that God is the unchangeable *I AM*.  
 He rejoices that He is a God of compassion and grace.  
 He rejoices in the works of His hands,

"Where all that  
 He views of beautiful or grand  
 In nature, from the broad majestic oak  
 To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God."

He rejoices in God's Word, where plan of salvation unfolded.  
 He rejoices in his relation to God as his Father in Christ.  
 He rejoices in the hope of the glory of God.  
 How different from the joy of the Epicurean reveller.  
 There is no sting in the believer's joy.  
 His is fellowship in the joy of God.

## III. THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH IT IS TO BE EXHIBITED.

"Alway."

Easy in prosperity, but a mockery to bid us when crushed  
 by misfortune.  
 Unconverted fail to apprehend force of Ps. xxix. 10.  
 Therefore easily cast down in adversity.  
 But believer can say, Hab. iii. 17, 18.  
 So it will be with you when taught by Holy Spirit.  
 You will see the reasonableness of injunction of *text*.  
 As you know the sun shines though obscured by clouds.  
 As earth swings round in its orbit, so faith clings to God's  
 unchangeableness.  
 Joy perpetual from perception of unalterable character of  
 our relationship to God.  
 Also from knowing that the way to Him is always open.

If worldling can school himself into sound common-sense philosophy, *à fortiori* a believer.  
He knows he has One on whom to lean.

In darkest shades if He appear,  
My dawning is begun,  
He is my soul's bright morning star,  
And He my rising sun.

Cultivate this spiritual joy.  
It will furnish a motive to obedience.  
It will give you a relish for God's service.  
It will prevent you returning to the flesh-pots of Egypt.  
It will enable you to exhibit attractiveness of Christianity.  
It will testify to your union with Christ. John xvi. 22.

#### THE SOURCE OF SALVATION AND STRENGTH.

"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; in returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength; and ye would not."—Is. xxx. 15.

The history of Israel a humiliating record of human folly.  
No wonder God should say, vs. 8, 9.  
Something truly marvellous in their unbelief.  
Untaught by the past, they preferred to be deceived, v. 10.  
Their conduct has its parallel amongst us, therefore need to listen to God's message. *Text.*

Subject of this prophecy.

Israel's terror at approach of Assyrian army.  
Look to Egypt for help—but why not to God?  
Because man always looks first to false sources of confidence.  
A consequence of "the enmity of the carnal mind."  
But soon found they trusted in a broken reed.  
Better far had they listened to Him who says, *text.*

These words contain the sum and substance of the Gospel.

They point out to us :

#### **I. THE MEANS OF SALVATION.** These consist;

##### **I. In returning to God.**

"All we like sheep have gone astray."  
Self love ever suggesting flattering excuse for our conduct.

Blind to consequences, men pursue objects of carnal desire.  
 But God calls on them to stop ere it be too late.  
 Too often, alas! refuse to listen, or turn from one object  
 to follow another, so that, Jer. ii. 36.  
 If wise we shall return like the penitent prodigal.  
 We shall find God ready to receive and welcome us.  
 "Return unto thy rest, O my soul."

## 2. In resting in Him.

To obtain pardon not enough. John xv. 4.  
 Apostacy denounced. 2 Pet. ii. 22.  
 Apostacy a confession that men have tried God and found  
 Him wanting.  
 The apostate placed by Satan under a stronger guard.  
 Luke xi. 26.  
 God's promises are absolute, but warnings also added.  
 While the believer is called to rejoice, it is with trembling.  
 Peace secured by resting in Christ.  
 What have we to do in the way of Egypt? Jer. ii. 18.  
 Let us betake ourselves to Jesus, as we cry,

Lord, thou hast made us for Thyself, and ever  
 Thy presence should within my heart be known,  
 Could I but prosper in the poor endeavour  
 I feebly make, to keep it for thine own.  
 Lord, I beseech Thee calm its wild emotion,  
 From earth's delusive idols set it free,  
 And fill with holy thoughts of meek devotion,  
 This restless heart that fain would rest on Thee.\*

## II. THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH. Text.

Wondrous efficacy in quiet waiting on God.  
 Israel at the Red Sea. Exod. xiv. 13.  
 Our fears of man may well be stilled when we think,  
 Ps. xlv. 9.  
 Faith lies passive in His hands.  
 Acting thus we shall understand how to obey Eph. vi. 10.  
 It is written Prov. xiv. 26.  
 Sense of their own weakness, makes them cast selves on  
 God's strength.  
 Their faith casts anchor on God's promises.  
 Influence which the mind exerts over the body.  
 Confidence in convictions impart strength to character.

\* Mrs. Abdy, in Lays of the Sanctuary.



Faith the peculiar gift of elevated characters—the source of true greatness.

Faith enabled Columbus to discover America.

Faith sustained the Roman senate when Hannibal was thundering almost at the gates of the Eternal City.

It is this which transforms ordinary men into heroes.

*A fortiori*, Christian faith. Matt. xvii. 20.

Its magic power illustrated in Heb. xi.

What right have you then to give way to despondency?

Learn meaning of *text*.

Well if we could stop here—but alas! “Ye would not.”

Mark not God’s sovereign will, but man’s perverse resolve.

They would go down to Egypt, though ch. xxxi. 3.

Contrast the “I will” of compassionate love, and the “Ye will not” of depraved obstinacy.

So Christ, John v. 40 and Matt. xxiii. 37.

How fearful a decision! Is it yours?

On this eve of Christmas God once more invites you.

## RESULTS OF THE OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT.

“Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”—Isaiah xxxii. 16, 17.

The picture of security and peace here, very pleasant to contemplate.

Prophet’s language like subsiding of a tempest.

Much that betokens turbulence, vs. 5 and 9.

But he announces dawn of happier era, v. 1.

Some refer this to reformation under Hezekiah.

But a greater than Hezekiah here, v. 2.

No hiding-place for sinner like Christ.

Through Him we enjoy outpouring of God’s Spirit.

Man craves His indwelling as instinctive want of His nature.

For this craving God makes promises when, v. 15.

Then Isaiah describes its happy consequences.

### I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, v. 16.

Idea in prophet’s mind of a well-regulated kingdom.

Even a tyrannical despotism better than a lawless anarchy.

But where laws are just, and enforced, then well with a nation.

Then reign of law and order prevails from capital outwards.  
To people of East such an announcement peculiarly refreshing.

But fall short, if content with this superficial view.  
What is this righteousness, so emphatically announced?  
Define "righteousness" or "judgment"—synonymous terms.  
The grand characteristic of God Himself. Job xxxvi. 3.

God requires man to exhibit this righteousness.

But lost capacity—therefore Christ came to restore it.

Justified by faith—a faith which worketh by love.

Perfect pattern of Christ's righteousness copied, so that  
there is a reality in their Christian walk.

This the kind of righteousness both Old and New Testaments insist on.

Deut. vi. 25 ; 1 John ii. 29 ; 1 John iii. 7.

Ours must be the absolute surrender of our whole self  
to God.

As believers, we shall have received from Jesus the power of  
obedience.

This necessarily so from reception of the Holy Ghost.

Ours must be no crooked rule of conduct.

The Spirit must assume regulation of our whole inner and  
outer man.

## **II. THE IMPARTATION OF PEACE, v. 17.**

Peace cannot exist where there is no rectitude or justice.

Man craves after peace.

When it is wanting, there is intense restlessness.

It is the constant revolution, stale  
And tasteless, of the same repeated joys,  
That palls and satiates and makes languid life  
A pedlar's pack that bows the bearer down.

No getting rid of this but by acquaintance with God.

As patient has no rest till fever departs—so with the sinner.

Is. lvii. 20, 21.

But when he embraces Christ he finds peace. Rom. viii. 1.

Something noble in attitude of justified believer. Ps.  
cxii. 7.

He has allied himself to the God of Jacob.

He has no misgivings as to propriety or rectitude of his proceedings.

Presents a living illustration of Rom. vi. 22.

A holy calm diffused throughout whole being.

This peace a permanent possession. *Text.*

As immortal beings we are impelled to forecast the future.

We know that death approaches, and after death, the judgment.

Can I contemplate that future with confidence ?

Yes, I have no misgivings for *text*.

This enables the believer to say, 1 Cor. xv. 55.

Beyond Jordan of death, the sweet fields of heavenly Canaan where *text*.

This a matter of present comfort and enjoyment.

We want to realise Cant. vi. 3.

Why should you be blindly seeking Jesus, shrinking from Him when He would reveal Himself to your souls ?

Be in earnest.

Then the Spirit will be poured out on you.

## THE FOUNDER OF A KINGDOM.

“ But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever : a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.”—Heb. i. 8.

To-day we commemorate birth of Christ.

Our Church invites us to enter into feelings of those who watched for His nativity.

They lived in a time of anarchy, as if heard God saying, Ezek. xxi. 27.

Now He enters world, which is hushed in peace.

Yet that world knew nothing of mystery of His birth.

Regarded with contempt the infant of Bethlehem.

Yet to that infant this sublime language is addressed, *text*.

## I. THE STABILITY OF HIS THRONE.

A quotation from Ps. xlv.—A remarkable psalm.

Said to have been composed in celebration of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter.

Hardly likely of an event which was a violation of God's law.

Besides, the righteousness it speaks of does not agree with abuses of Solomon's administration.

And Solomon's reign of forty years does not tally with *text*. Applies only to "the man who is Jehovah's fellow."

Socinian version, "unto the Son He saith, God is Thy throne for ever."

But affirmation of Christ's deity as King of His Church.

He came as prophet, priest, and king.

Predictions of His royal supremacy abound, especially in Psalms.

Perhaps David saw in unnatural conduct of his children evidences of the impossibility of fulfilment of God's promises.

Yet those promises very precious, Ps. lxxxix. 29.

Conduct of Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah, might well cause misgivings as to stability of his house.

To the Jews those promises were equally precious.

Saw misgivings of David confirmed.

Sunk under heel of Rome, so that might well say, Ps. lxxxix. 49.

Yet God's promises were fulfilled, Matt. ii. 2.

Yes, heir of David born, but in a rebellious province. Matt. ii. 3.

The slaves of a usurper could only be troubled as One of whom said *text*.

Announced as the founder of a kingdom.

That kingdom to be a visible fellowship of redeemed souls.

A universal society, absorbing all into itself.

Empires had existed, but generating in themselves the elements of their own dismemberment.

But contrast Kingdom of Christ, Dan. ii. 44.

Christ born when Roman empire was exhibiting its lack of cohesion.

An iron nation, welding other nations to it by brute force.

But rotten to the core, ruled over by monsters in human shape.

How different Christ's kingdom.

John xviii. 36, its fundamental principle.

It was to be established in individual hearts.

It was to extend its influence throughout the world.

It was to endure for ever.

Eternity shall ratify declaration of *text*.

**II. THE EQUITY OF HIS GOVERNMENT.**

Jews failed to see that righteousness was to be prevailing characteristic of Messiah's kingdom.

Hence the Baptist's warning to the Pharisees and Sadducees. His administration equitable, insuring fullest freedom. Such described in *text*.

The sceptre of Christ is His Word.

This the rod of His strength.

It is emphatically a right sceptre.

Not arbitrary commands but reasonable regulations.

Laws may be just, yet may press severely, as Acts xv. 10.

But Christ says, Matt. xi. 30. Comp. 1 John v. 3.

"Not grievous," because He supplies aid of Holy Spirit.

"Not grievous," because they free soul from power of sin, &c.

"Not grievous," because beget love of justice, and therefore secure peace. Comp. Isaiah xxxii. 17.

Thus He proves "the Prince of Peace."

This the blessing which you must seek.

The sense of security in Christ will make it a happy Christmas.

**THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.**

"And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn."—Luke ii. 7.

Interest felt in incidents connected with birth and childhood of great men.

Disposition to represent prodigies having occurred at their birth.

*e.g.* Romulus, Alexander the Great, Cæsar, &c.

Scripture confirms this view.

*e.g.* Isaac, Sampson, Samuel, John the Baptist.

How much more so at birth of Jesus Christ.

To-day God put on the man; sketch incidents.

But rationalists assert—

"That after Christ had made Himself conspicuous by His acts, men struck with His extraordinary character, formed a theory of His birth to correspond with it."\*

But this view contradicted by *text*.

\* Neander's Life of Christ, p. 14. Bohn's edition.

**I. THE CONDESCENSION OF CHRIST.**

Must not forget He is God as well as man. 1 Tim. vi.  
15, 16.

Yet "He emptied Himself."

He was "born of a woman," made like us in all things.

Pride naturally felt at hearing achievements done by one  
who is related to us.

Yet whose deeds greater than those of Jesus?

Is he not, too, our brother?

Well may we meditate on His condescension.

"She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes."

Treated precisely as ordinary infants.

Fulfilment of prophecy. Isaiah vii. 15.

Given as a sign to the shepherds. v. 12.

They would anticipate some unusual sight, but no halo of  
glory around His brow.

Had it not been for angelic announcement they would not  
have recognized Him.

Is it not so still? What does the natural man see in Jesus?

Only "a babe wrapped," &c.

Believe in Him as they believe in any historical personage.

Consequently they are amazed at believers. Cant. v. 9.

These enlightened. Eph. i. 17.

"She laid Him in a manger."

House of David shorn of its earthly honours.

In this see wisdom of God displayed.

Knew opinion of carnal mind respecting rank and wealth.

But Christ must be sought for Himself alone.

The tinsel of earthly splendour must not hide pure gold of  
His perfections.

Believers find in Him the true riches.

They praise Him for the riches of His grace, goodness, wis-  
dom and glory.

Also lesson of encouragement for humble penitent.

None too poor or vile for Him to save.

See here a pledge of sincerity of His invitations.

Receives sinners, yea, even "the chief."

**II. THE RECEPTION HE MET WITH FROM MANKIND.**

Bustle of crowded inn prevented notice of His arrival.

Citizens of Bethlehem degenerated from spirit of royal.

Psalmist. Ps. xlv. 1.

Magi and shepherds put them to shame.

In vain had Daniel foretold the time, and Micah the place.  
 "Jesus came unto His own and His own received Him not."  
 And yet it was God asking for a resting-place on His  
 own earth.

He who cries, "And yet there is room," could find none for  
 Himself.

But if these Jews could have seen Him aright, how differently  
 would they have acted.

Human nature remains still the same.

They cry, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread" (Luke  
 xiv. 15), but despise Bread of Life.

They have no room for Christ at present.

How is it with you?

Jesus stands knocking at door of your heart.

Entreat Him to come in.

No presumption in asking Him to do so.

He will transform the stable of your heart into the presence-  
 chamber of Jehovah.

Dagon will fall broken before the ark of His presence.

Thus this day will be to you a happy Christmas.

#### THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH CHRIST CAME.

"God sent forth His Son made of a woman."—Gal. iv. 4.

This day we celebrate birth of Christ.

Plan of redemption known only to God.

Manifested in fulness of time.

World busy, only shepherds heard anthem—only sages saw  
 star.

Events of His birth arranged to coincide with prophecy.

Parents compelled to leave Nazareth to go to Bethlehem.

Here "great David's greater Son" born.

Did not He who was rich for our sakes become poor?

Text expresses doctrine of Christ's humanity.

God sent Him forth from heaven qualified for task.

Sent Him that man may see in Him "brightness of Father's  
 glory."

This needed, or God would have continued unknown.

He may be seen in His works.

He is revealed in His Word.

But God needed to become incarnate. 1 John i. 1, 2.  
 Dwelt among us, not by a symbol, but really, personally.  
 Consider purposes for which Christ sent ;

### **I. TO OBEY THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE LAW.**

The law the expression of God's will.  
 Introduced to make sin exceeding sinful.  
 Its righteous enactments were broken.  
 Therefore its righteous character had to be vindicated.  
 This Jesus did.

### **II. TO SUFFER THE PENALTY OF DEATH.**

This follows from the preceding.  
 Where law broken its penalties must be put in force.  
 Death the doom of Adam, the seeds of death in his posterity.  
 Temporal death the symbol and prelude of spiritual.  
 But God sent Son to endure penalty, Heb. ii. 14, 15.  
 He paid debt of humanity.

### **III. TO PRESENT THE CREATURE TO GOD.**

Everything "very good" at beginning.  
 But when sin entered, God could not view world with complacency.  
 Yet not taken by surprise, His Son came forward.  
 Became "bone of our bone," in order to present inheritance.  
 Brought nigh by blood of Christ.

### **IV. TO BESTOW THE SPIRIT UPON MEN.**

That Spirit at the beginning had brooded over chaos.  
 He had energized in the prophets.  
 But needed to be poured out on mankind in general.  
 Christ on earth "despised and rejected of men."  
 His life presented no attractions to the world.  
 Only a timid, scanty band enrolled as His followers.  
 But when Spirit poured out, gave "gifts for the rebellious."  
 Then a change in the prospects of Christ's kingdom.  
 Then world gazed with astonishment at martyrs, &c.  
 Rebellious, proud, &c., transformed into "glorious company of apostles," &c.



**V. TO RECEIVE HIS CHURCH INTO GLORY.**

Christ claims glory as right, to bestow it on Church.  
 Here its members are partakers of Christ's sufferings.  
 Sustained under them by His spiritual presence.  
 Christ ascended into heaven retaining human nature.  
 There He waits to welcome His redeemed ones.

Such some of the purposes for which Christ came.  
 No wonder Christmas a time of joy.  
 But also a time of self-examination.  
 Are we born of the Spirit, as He was born in the flesh?  
 He became Son of Man, are we made sons of God?  
 He was born in world, are we keeping ourselves unspotted  
 from it?

**THE FULNESS OF THE TIME.**

"But when the fulness of the time was come."—Gal. iv. 4.

The word "Church" properly belongs to the New Testament.  
 A Saxon word—corresponding to Greek *ἐκκλησία*.  
 Originally denoted an assembly of citizens called together to  
 transact public business.  
 Then applied to those who had responded to call of Christ.  
 Occasionally used in Scripture in a more extended sense.  
 Acts vii. 38.

The Apostle here contrasting Church of New Testament  
 with the Jewish Church.

He represents the latter as an heir in his minority, vs. 1-3.  
 The former as the same person who has attained his  
 majority, vs. 4 and 5.

But now confine attention to phrase "fulness of the time."

From fall, mankind looked forward to a period of  
 restoration. Gen. iii. 15.

The faithful kept that promise in view.

Yet the world waxed worse—then the deluge.

Again sun of promise shone out—exact period foretold.

Altogether 4000 years elapsed, then *text*.

Define the phrase and consider ;

**I. IT WAS A TIME APPOINTED IN THE DECREES OF GOD.**

This indeed true of every time.

But this selected with consummate care, if such an expression may be allowed.

Human reason might question the propriety of its selection. Why should Christ have come at the twilight of the world? Why should so many have perished without hearing of Him?

But such reasoning applies equally to all God's dealings.

Why did God take six days in which to create the world?

Why did He not deliver Israel from Egypt at once?

Why does He suffer new forms of disease to baffle science?

Why does He cut off a youth of brilliant talents, before he can exercise them?

Easy to multiply such questions—their answer is “such is the will of God.” Rom. ix. 20.

He ordains the fitting moment, and we can only say “let God be wise but every man a fool.” Rom. iii. 4.

**II. IT WAS A TIME FORETOLD BY THE PROPHETS OF GOD.**

Eve imagined her first-born was the Redeemer. Gen. iv. 1.

But instead of a Saviour he proved a murderer.

At last Jacob furnished a note of time. Gen. xlix. 10.

Points to a period of national decadence.

Fulfilled in condition of Jews—witness their exclamation. John xix. 15.

Not quote individual prophecies, but refer to growing clearness as time rolled on.

This clearness seen especially in the prophets of the second temple. Haggai iv. 9—Zech. vi. 12—Matt. iii. 1.

But greater precision of statement in Dan. ix. 24, 25.

Difficulty here in fixing antecedent date, whether from proclamation of Cyrus, or from second edict of Darius Nothus.

There is always necessarily a degree of uncertainty in prophecy.

Intended to excite hope, and watchfulness.

It had this effect on those who looked for redemption in Israel.

**III. IT WAS A TIME ADAPTED FOR THE PURPOSES OF GOD.**

The world had been left to itself for 4000 years.

The experiment of procuring its own salvation had signally failed.

It was made under favourable circumstances.

Yet the mightiest intellects of Greece and Rome could only despairingly ask "what is truth?"

Their religion only fostered a system of corruption.

Brought in contact with the Jews, they saw the superiority of Monotheism.

The old superstitions had lost hold of thinking minds—a universal longing was felt.

This longing felt peculiarly by the Jews.

Prophecy pointed to mighty deliverer like Sampson, or monarch like Solomon.

But now crushed under iron heel of Rome.

A faithful few had learned to modify their self-complacent views, and looked for spiritual Messiah.

They saw that the law had failed to secure righteousness.

Besides this the glories of Judaism had vanished—no fire on altar—no cloud of glory—no Urim and Thummim—no spirit of prophecy.

Add to all this, that Rome had welded nations into one vast empire.\*

It was a time of universal peace.

It was a period when the Greek language was the current medium of thought.

Such are some of the reasons we can discern.

Yet when the Redeemer appeared He was rejected.

So it will be at His Second Advent. Luke xviii. 8.

**THE NAME OF JESUS.**

"And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS; for He shall save His people from their sins."—Matt. i. 21.

Never was a more memorable announcement made.

The fulness of time come, Gal. iv. 4.

His birth not according to natural laws—a new thing was done upon earth. Jer. xxxi. 22.

\* Eadie on Ephesians i. 10.

He came to be the creative origin of a new race.  
 In that unconscious infant the great mystery of godliness  
 was presented for the first time.  
 Well may we like the shepherds of Bethlehem draw near.  
 Let us consider—

## I. THE APPOINTMENT OF HIS NAME.

A name distinguishes a person.

In Scripture used to convey certain ideas as to his nature, or character, or office.

God condescends to reveal Himself by names.

The Jews gave names to children suggested by circumstances of birth, as Jacob, Esau, &c.

Interwove name of God with child's, as Elijah, Abimelech, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, &c.

This evidently sanctioned by God, who curtails it in order to punish, as in case of Jeconiah, Jer. xxii. 28.

On the other hand He rewards similarly, as Abraham, Israel.

Again names His servants before birth, as John, Luke i. 13.

So here. Ratification of earliest promise in Eden, Acts xiii. 23.

No other name gives us what we need, Acts iv. 12.

Yet it was a common name in Palestine.

Those who bore it only types of the great Saviour.

Among these worthies two pre-eminent.

(1). Joshua, the son of Nun, originally called Oshea.

(2). Joshua, the High Priest, crowned by Zechariah.

Types of Christ, who is the angel of Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, the Captain of Joshua v. 14, the great High Priest of our profession.

A name that should be deeply engraved on all our hearts.

"Jesus the name that soothes our fears.

That bids our sorrows cease,

'Tis music in a sinner's ears,

'Tis life, and health, and peace."

## II. THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HIS OFFICE.

Cheering as announcement of deliverance from foreign yoke.  
 Such the state of Israel when announcement first made,  
 Isaiah vii. 14.

If name Immanuel given because of unbelief, Jesus given because of faith.

Revealed as deliverer from fiercer tyrant than Egypt or Assyria.

*Text.* He shall save them from the guilt of sin.

He shall save them from the power of sin.

Thus saved from penalty by His price, and from pollution by His power.

Cannot congratulate ourselves on the first if not realized the second.

Justification and sanctification inseparable graces.

It is this which constitutes us "his people," Titus ii. 14.

A calumny to say that the freeness of grace is an encouragement to sin.

To do so would be to ensure damnation.

Love for Him who pardons sin, produces obedience.

"Saves *from* sins"—delivers from thralldom—confers liberty.

Gospel reveals not an allowance, but an atonement for sinners.

Consider your interest in this name.

He who was born in Bethlehem must be born in your hearts.

Desire to see in you evidences of this, Gal. iv. 19.

He stands knocking at your door, Cant. v. 2.

Expel all else to receive Him.

Then realize all that name implies—Jehovah Shammah, Ezek. xlvi. 35.

Thus celebrate aright this joyous festival.

A season of feasting of purified souls on fat things of Christ's love.

A season of solemn dedication of yourselves to God.

A season when love and peace should reign.

## IMMANUEL.

Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Isaiah vii. 14.

Spoken at an important epoch in history of Israel.

Confederacy of Ephraim with Syria had alarmed Ahaz.

The prophet sent to encourage him vs. 3 and 4.

Offers a sign which he refuses. Then *text*.

Given to Ahaz in judgment, but full of comfort to God's people.

Revived their hope in coming Messiah. Rom. viii. 32.

Consider truths implied in name Immanuel.

## **I. HE IS GOD EMBODIED IN HUMAN FORM.**

"God manifest in the flesh" a mystery but not a myth.

One who became really man. 1 John iv. 2.

Names of Jews frequently compounded with El.

But different here, expresses His nature—God incarnate.

There was a necessity for this.

Man "a religious animal," one formed to look up to God.

But an abstract Deity has no attraction for the sinner.

It drives to two extremes, Atheism or Pantheism.

The latter more usual, hence heathenism.

In opposition to this Moses proclaimed Deut. vi. 4, and iv. 15.

Hence Judaism viewed with dislike by heathen, from want of visible representation of Deity.

Yet to multiply idols, evidently no satisfactory solution of the problem.

If heathens viewed God as infinite, this inconsistent with personality.\*

If as omnipresent, inconsistent with a temple. Is. lxvi. 1.

But in Jesus there is something for humanity to grasp.

In Him we see the infinite God subjecting Himself to finite laws.

In Him we see the true temple. John i. 14.

We need no idol to represent God for, Heb. i. 3.

He is the Alpha and Omega. Is. xlv. 6.

When the soul of man craves, as Exod. xxxiii. 18, or as John xiv. 8, his answer satisfies, John xiv. 9.

It was this attracted the philosopher—the peasant—the Roman—the Greek—the barbarian—and still attracts the sinner.

## **II. HE IS IMMANUEL THE CONSTANT PROTECTOR OF HIS PEOPLE.**

True, He was so before His incarnation. Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15.

Symbolised by fiery pillar, by Urim and Thummim, and by prophets.

\* Compare Mansel's *Limits of Religious Thought*, p. 84.

Periods when this was withdrawn, as 1 Sam. iii. 1  
 Did not however, finally cease till Antitype appeared.  
 Moreover His forbearance to them arose from this, Rom. ix. 5.  
 Hence in denouncing judgment, He never forgot that they  
 were His covenant people.  
 Compare Isaiah viii. 6—8. Ray of comfort in the fact that  
 it is Immanuel's land.\*  
 Announcement of judgment thus a prophecy of restoration.  
 Continuance of Divine economy depends on covenant with  
 Christ.  
 To the agonies of the cross indebted for all blessings.  
 And thus is God our Father. Matt. v. 45.

### III. HE IS IMMANUEL RECONCILING GOD AND MAN.

"God with us" conveys no consolation to the unconverted  
 sinner.  
 Even as a Protector, He may protect now to punish finally.  
 We want some one to effect peace.  
 Jesus is Jacob's ladder uniting earth to heaven.  
 His sacrifice has appeased the Divine wrath.  
 Indeed God was never at enmity with man for, 1 Pet. i. 20.  
 But caution, God not reconciled to His elect while they  
 continue in sin. Col. i. 21, 22.  
 God now reconciling world to Himself. 2 Cor. v. 20.

### IV. HE IS IMMANUEL AS GOD SYMPATHISING WITH HIS PEOPLE.

We crave for sympathy.  
 That craving satisfied in Jesus. Heb. ii. 14.  
 His path in life not one sheltered from the ruder blasts of  
 adversity.  
 His presence and sympathy lightens every load and sanctifies  
 every trial.  
 His experience sanctifies childhood, youth and manhood.†  
 In Him the rich and poor find a common bond of union.  
 Death robbed of its terrors by Him.  
 The wants and weaknesses of our mortal nature have been  
 ennobled by Him.  
 Let His example exert its influence on you.

\* Hengstenberg's Christology, vol. II. p. 49.

† Mansel's "Limits of Religious Thought," p. 162.

## CIRCUMCISION A SIGN AND A SEAL.

"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised."—Rom. iv. 11.

Some of God's ordinances of a sacramental character.

A superstitious view of them to be guarded against.

Tendency to substitute sign for thing signified.

Thus the means of grace degraded into grounds of dependence.

The rock on which thousands make shipwreck.

Scripture fertile in protests against it.

Christian sacraments answer to Jewish ones.

Christ not minute in directions as to mode of administration, &c.

Christian Church not in a state of minority and pupilage.

General principles furnished us, and guided in their application by study of God's dealings with ancient Israel.

God "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

See this in law of circumcision.

Exalted news of Jews regarding it, but Paul puts it on its true footing, as "a sign" and "a seal." *Text.*

## I. A SIGN.

The invisible God must manifest Himself by signs.

Frequently employed by Him.

Gave rainbow as sign of covenant of providence to Noah.

When made a covenant of grace, gave sign. Gen. xvii. 10, 11.

A sign of distinctiveness, marking holy nation.

No objection, that circumcision may have been practised before.

Rainbow merely *adopted* as sign, but by being so acquired new and beautiful significance.

So circumcision a meaning for Jews, which others could not understand.

A sign that he was one of a race, to whom belonged, Rom. ix. 4, 5.

What was the thing signified by it?

Same as baptism, the necessity of a new birth.

Refer to case of Abram.

He had lived on God's promise for twenty-five years.



Yet how hopeless it appeared, so that at last prays, Gen. xvii. 18.

Yes, God says, but my promise stands, only thou must be purified before child of promise born.

Yes, Isaac not "born after the flesh"—organ of generation purified.

Then when Isaac is born must enter covenant.\*

Thus sign witnessing to corruption of fallen nature. John i. 13.

Further witnesses to new life permeating all the members.

Spiritual circumcision of ear, lips, heart, &c.

Language of Moses and Paul identical. Comp. Deut. xxx. 6, with Rom. ii. 28, 29.

## II. A SEAL.

Refer to superstitious view of Sacraments.

Council of Trent says—

"If any one say that by the Sacraments of the new covenant themselves, grace is not conferred by the efficacy of the right (*opus operatum*), but that faith alone is sufficient for obtaining grace—let him be accursed."

Same view taught by too many in Church of England.

Baptism, it is said, ensures regeneration, "has justification first consigned by it."†

How opposed to Paul's argument here.

Abram justified before circumcision; given as seal, *text*.

God's mark of approval of his faith.

Abram had been tested, God had visited him. Gen. xv. 5, 6.

God there wrote his name in book of life, and in setting seal of circumcision authenticates His signature.

Makes over actual conveyance of blessings, of which Isaac's birth the first fruits.

View sacraments thus, as seals of our faith.

The recognition of our membership with Christ.

How many professing Christians make light of them!

They say, why trouble myself about the empty sign when I possess the reality.

But does not this prove you are wanting the first elements of faith?

Then, too, is the sign of no value?

Take the case of coronation—as a sign, is it of no value?

\* Lange on Genesis xvii. note, p. 424.

† Comp. Bishop Wordsworth's note on Rom. iv. 25, *et passim*.

But it is more, a seal, the nation's acceptance of sovereign.  
Coronation does not make the king, but proclaims him—so  
baptism.\*

So with Lord's supper, if faith genuine, it will impel you  
to use the ordinance.

Bread and wine signs—your partaking of them a sign.

But also seals of God's favour—strengthening faith.

Renewal of covenant, God meeting you as He did Abram.

Come then to the Lord's table.

Jesus commenced earthly career in pain.

As a son learned obedience at outset, perfected on cross.

Enter into His spirit of obedience now.

#### THE NEW YEAR.

"My times are in thy hand."—Ps. xxxi. 15.

To-day we wish each other "a happy new year."

We seem to stand at a fresh starting point.

Naturally we wish each other well through it.

Yet how many utter it with a sore heart.

*Text*, a thought full of consolation to every believer.

We stand on the threshold of the new year.

It is a solemn time.

Consider thoughts suggested by *text*.

It teaches us ;

#### I. OUR DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

The ungodly disown God's providential government.

But believer rejoices that "the Lord reigneth."

Reconciles him to present evils, and fortifies against future  
ones.

He is convinced that nothing is casual or accidental.

God has steered his bark from earliest infancy.

Our times marked out by Him.

Gives and takes away temporal blessings. Amos viii. 11.

No circumstance too trivial for Him.

Look back on past year and discern His hand.

In His hand, too, are the seasons of death as well as the  
occurrences of life.

\* Robertson's Sermon on Gal. iii. 26—29, Vol. II.

Death at last comes to all.  
 Man lives on word of God's mouth.  
 Our wisest course to cling to His love and faithfulness.  
 Pillows dying heads of His people in Jesus's bosom.  
 How many have thus passed away in past year.  
 They appeal to us to "acquaint ourselves with God."  
 Begin year by consecrating yourselves anew to Him.

## II. OUR SECURITY IN GOD.

This afforded David comfort and confidence.  
 We are always exposed to perils.  
 Yet *text* assures us that in God's hand we are safe.  
 We see this constantly exemplified in Scripture.  
 David hunted by Saul.  
 Our Lord had His "hour," and could say to Pilate,  
 John xix. 11.  
 Paul furnishes a list of His perils.  
 The Christian is immortal till His work is done.  
 Like Elisha at Dothan he is in God's hand.  
 None can hurt us without His permission.  
 The promise is still sure. Is. liv. 17.  
 Faith in this promise would banish care.  
 Peter asks, Pet. iii. 13?  
 While our times are in His hand we are safe though in a  
 den of lions.

**Learn to seek God without delay.**

Do not provoke Him to withdraw His support.  
 Do not despise His patience and forbearance.  
 Begin now to seek Him as you never sought Him before.  
 Think to how little purpose you have hitherto lived.  
 Ask Him for grace to "number your days."  
 True wisdom consists in knowing God in Christ.

**Learn to serve him without fear.**

Servile fear is banished from a believer's service.  
 Yet he often shrinks from boldly giving himself up for God's  
 service.

Fear of man brings a snare. Is. li. 12, 13.

Let thought of His presence dispel fear.  
 Every trial be sure will come duly weighed and meted.

**Learn to trust Him without carefulness.**

Where could our times be in better keeping?  
 Shall proofs of His past love fail to banish anxiety?

Shall we desire to wrest reins of government from His hands?  
 He doth all things well.  
 To Him, then, let us commit ourselves and all belonging  
 to us.

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### THE STAR IN THE EAST.

"Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east and are come to worship Him."—Matt. ii. 2.

Circumstances of Christ's birth confirm epithet "wonderful."  
 Came to be the light and life of men—exerts attraction in  
 Bethlehem.

Not designed for one section of world's population. Is. lx. 3.  
 Narrative here full of interest.

Legend of three kings has no foundation.

Magi, *i.e.*, Persian priests of a religion opposed to idolatry.

Founded by Zoroaster and perpetuated in modern Parsees.

In Babylon the Magi and the Jews on friendly terms—Daniel  
 intercedes for them and was made head of their order.

Must have been familiar with Septuagint Scriptures.

Sent as a deputation—the first fruits of the Gentiles.

### I. THE LEADING OF THE STAR.

Give natural interpretation of Matthew's account.\*

Sceptics object to it as a mythological story.

Stars do not move about they say.

We reply, nothing surprising in God's creating an extra-  
 ordinary meteor under such circumstances.

Not more wonderful than the pillar of fire in the wilderness.

The aim of modern scepticism to get rid of Scriptural  
 miracles.

But we must not suffer ourselves to be robbed of them.

But touch upon opinions expressed by learned men.

These Eastern sages notoriously addicted to astrology.

In the East, stars shine with peculiar brilliancy.

They were familiar with Jewish expectations of a Messiah.

Balaam's prophecy must have deeply impressed them. Numb.  
 xxiv. 17.

Must have known something of Daniel ix. 25.

\* Star of the Wise Men, in Smith's Dict. of the Bible.

Add to this a world-wide expectation mentioned by Suetonius, Tacitus and Josephus.

It was at this juncture the star appeared.

Abarbanel in 1463 mentions that the Fish was the most important sign of the Zodiac for the Israelites, and that at the birth of Moses there was a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in that sign.\*

Kepler in 1604 observed a similar conjunction when a new star appeared.

He calculated that a similar conjunction took place in A. U. C. 747, when a new star must also have appeared.

Dr. Ideler of Berlin confirms this date as that of the birth of Christ, and hence infers this was the Star of the wise men.

All this shows that narrative here is not so opposed to scientific conclusions as sceptics represent.

Magi saw the star in a sign of the Zodiac, which in their astrology denoted Judea.

Illustrates God's condescension in stooping to weakness of men.

Astrology false, but God employed it. Is. xlv. 25.

These sages more noble than system in which they were educated.

They were no idle seekers after truth.

They will rise up to condemn us, if we shut our eyes.

Let their example stimulate you to offer yourselves.

Vainly we offer each ample oblation ;

Vainly with gifts would His favour secure ;

Richer by far is the heart's adoration,

Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

## II. THE INQUIRY OF THE WISE MEN.

Something very suggestive in this inquiry.

Easily gather elements of thought pervading their minds.

The world is a scene of discord and confusion.

Sinful element not only perplexes man's inner life, but acts outwardly on society.†

If this be so even now, how fearfully must it have told then.

\* Ebrard's Gospel History, p. 178.

† Trench's Hulsean Lecture—"The Founder of a Kingdom."

Evils resulting to hapless nations from ambition of despotic rulers.

Monsters in human shape only too common, like Herod.\*

Thoughtful men asked is "this wolfish theory" the true basis of human government?

Yearning felt for nobler basis, confirmed by Jewish prophets.

They pointed to a righteous King, the protector of His subjects. Is. xxxii. 1, 2.

Filled with vague conceptions of this kind, the wise men ask, *text*.

Look again at the form in which the inquiry was couched.

Mary and her husband no longer in a stable, v. 11.

Yet a mean abode, incompatible with royalty.

Yet the faith which prompted inquiry of *text*, not shaken by His mean surroundings.

Men *usurp* thrones, but *He* was born a king.

Nobler ancestry than any earthly monarch. Comp. Micah, v. 2.

"Born to raise the sons of earth," He had come to assume sovereignty.

Colossal empires of antiquity had fallen. Ezek. xxi. 27.

Aye, He has *the right* to reign, for exerts spell over human hearts.

Such was the king before whom Magi bowed, one who could say. John xviii. 37.

Men, brethren, and fathers, this king now reigns.

Have you done homage to him—are you His subjects?

Are you a joint heir with Christ, walking worthy of Him?

If not, seek Him now—ask Him to reign on throne of your heart.

Let ordinances, &c., operate like this star, to lead you to Him.

Then you will labour and pray for his last glorious Epiphany.

O Father ! haste the promised hour,

When at his feet shall lie

All rule, authority and power,

Beneath this ample sky :

When he shall reign from pole to pole,

The Lord of every human soul ;

\* Ellicott's Hulsean Lecture, p. 78.

When all shall heed the words he said  
 Amid their daily cares,  
 And by the loving life he led,  
 Shall strive to pattern theirs ;  
 And he who conquered Death shall win  
 The mightier conquest over sin.\*

## THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST.

"And I knew Him not ; but that He should be made manifest to Israel, herefore am I come baptizing with water."—John i. 31.

Unaffected simplicity of character of John the Baptist.  
 While admired by all, lowly in his own eyes.  
 Speaks of himself simply as "a voice."  
 Though all counted him for a prophet, how limited his sphere  
 of vision appeared to himself. "I knew Him not."  
 Compare Sir Isaac Newton—

"I know not how I appear to you, but to myself I seem as a little child gathering a few pebbles on the seashore, while the great ocean of truth lies undiscovered before me."

A mystery about Christ's person, unaided human intelligence could not fathom.

Meanwhile he has a duty to perform, *text*.

The Church now celebrates the Epiphany.

Gospels for Sundays after Epiphany present successive phases of it.

First Sunday, His manifestation to Gentiles—Eastern Magi.

Second, His manifestation in the temple.

Third and two following Sundays, the manifestation of His glory in miracles.

Last two Sundays, manifestation of it in future dispensation.  
 Now consider general subject of Christ's manifestation.

## I. THE NECESSITY OF IT.

This necessity John clearly perceived.

Messiah cynosure of all eyes, John xii. 32.

Attracted crowds wherever He went.

None could be ignorant ; "this thing not done in a corner."

This necessity evident, if view Christ in two aspects.

\* W. C. Bryant in "The Dictionary of Poetical Illustrations." (Dickinson & Higham.)

**(1). As the Light of Men.**

He was to be "the Sun of Righteousness."

Beams of sun manifest, even beneath clouds.

So Christ born in Bethlehem, &c., Matt. iv. 16.

Then some perceived Him, even as now under cloud of

Popish superstition, some embrace Him as Saviour.

Light a necessity for human beings.

What has no luminous power is not light, Eph. v. 13.

Light streaming into dark cavern disturbs reptiles.

So Christ disturbed Pharisaic religiosity; "away with Him."

Is there nothing of this among ourselves?

Pray for light to be manifested.

**(2). As the Life of Men.**

Light and life associated as figures of Christ, John i. 4, 5.

This must be so as long as *life* not manifested.

Sinners indulge in frivolity under idea they are enjoying life.

Ignorant of wrath resting on them.

Need for life to be manifested, for Son to reveal Father in the perfection of His holiness.

But such manifestation only a destruction.

But also reveals Him reconciled. Hence John xvii. 3.

Those thus led by Spirit can set seal to, 1 John i. 2.

**II. THE MEANS EMPLOYED TO EFFECT IT:**

Israel prepared by discipline of law.

Prophets also sent to unfold Divine purposes.

Not in vain, for reports circulated even among heathen.

Hence Magi, the first fruits of, Is. lx. 3.

Ought to have been more effectual, but Israel blind.

One last effort made; John sent to baptize.

Object of his ministry to expose real characters.

Jesus took up note he sounded, "repent ye."

Manifested glory by miracles.

Still manifests Himself in preached Gospel.

Annals of the church a history of that manifestation.

Christ set forth as light and life of men.



### III. ITS RESULTS UPON INDIVIDUALS.

Israel as a nation rejected Him.

In vain did Jesus lay His credentials before them, Isaiah liii. 1.

His manifestation altered their position, John xv. 24.

Nay more, committed sin against the Holy Ghost.

Evidenced in present condition of Jews.

Too many so-called Christians treading in their steps.

You who love sin—address you as Paul, Gal. iii. 1.

Do not continue to sin against your own souls.

But happily others drawn, who say, John vi. 68.

Enjoyed a spiritual manifestation of Christ.

Take care to walk humbly, to recognize grace which has made you to differ.

You form part of Father's gift to Son, John xvii. 6.

Continue to delight in Christ.

### THE CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. xii. 1.

Doctrine and practice united by St. Paul.

Preceding chapter concludes doctrinal part of Epistle.

God's sovereignty leaves no ground for boasting.

To Jew and Gentile alike, say *text*.

### I. AN APPEAL. "I beseech you by the mercies of God."

Deep seriousness of Apostle's language.

Not language of harsh command.

Hearers may be indifferent, but Apostle plies appeal.

Form of appeal carries great weight.

May be regarded as instance of Paul's refined delicacy.

Apostolic authority in background, but *form* suggests his right to command.

"Beseech by mercies," which have made me what I am.

1 Tim. i. 12, 13.

But rather "mercies" before dilated on.

Which have provided means of justification.

Which have raised us up. Chap. v. 2.  
 Which have set free from bondage of sin.  
 Which have set free from fears of disquieted conscience.  
 Which have provided Almighty agent to seal as God's elect.  
*These* "the mercies;" who not yield?

## II. AN ENTREATY, "That ye present," &c.

Urges on those, to whom unfolded riches of grace.  
 Author of grace only worthy object of worship.  
 Worship always connected with self-sacrifice.  
 When Abraham said, Gen. xxii. 5, sacrifice intended.  
 When wise men of east worshipped, presented gifts.  
 So we urged to present gift "ourselves."  
 Not merely soul, but "body," as, 1 Cor. vi. 20.  
 Not as under law, present a dumb animal.  
 Consecration of self consequent on perception of Christ's  
 sacrifice, whereby "king and priest unto God."  
 As priest here offering not inanimate carcase.  
 Not transient ceremony, but perpetual dedication.  
 Yes, we are priests! Consider duties of office.  
 How acquire right view, but by teaching of Holy Spirit.  
 As priest, "not servants of men." 1 Cor. vii. 23.  
 My offering, my body, therefore Rom. vi. 13.  
 Not as mutilated trunk. Mal. i. 8.  
 External purity. 1 Thess. iv. 4, 2 Cor. vii. 1.  
 Time, influence, money, all consecrated.  
 Are you prepared to do this?  
 If withholding from God what He demands, not appreciating  
 priesthood, not yielding to mercies.  
 If, however, obeying, "holy, acceptable."  
 As legal victim without blemish, so Christian offering.  
 Holy, { (1). In accordance with God's command, through  
           faith in Christ.  
           (2). Because consecrated to Him who is holiness  
           itself.  
 Therefore "acceptable."  
 Sees fruit of Son's atonement, reconstruction of handiwork.  
 Shrine—habitation—house.

## III. GROUND ON WHICH ENTREATY BASED. "Which is your reasonable service."

If above true, sacrifice commends itself to reason.  
 If man a piece of shattered mechanism bring it to maker.

Common sense points to this, suggests no patching of any use. Scripture says only as living sacrifice, rise to fulness of stature of true manhood.

But some assert "reasonable" points to contrast between Levitical and Christian offering. Answer already suggested in expression, "living sacrifice."

Others, to contrast between Judaism and Christianity.

Judaism law of carnal command and observance, and therefore to some extent superstitious.

Christianity tells of "mercies,"—exhibits God in Fatherly aspect.

Sacrifice seen in this light is not loss but true gain.

What response are you making ?

### THE SON IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.

"And when they saw him, they were amazed; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—Luke ii. 48, 49.

Christ's life on earth, one of holy obedience.

Of His childhood only a general record given, v. 40.

No minute details of His early life, like those in Apocryphal Gospels.

Waiting the Father's appointed time, He proves Himself, Isaiah xlv. 15.

The Holy Ghost has seen fit to furnish only this incident.

Sketch the occurrence, and consider.

### I. THE MOTHER'S REPROOF.

Joseph stood in silent reverence.\*

Mary ventures with a mother's right to speak, yet in her husband's name.

No wonder they remonstrate with Him, for always obedient till now.

No wonder they sorrowed, for remembered Herod's cruelty.

No wonder they seek after Him, for as a child He needed their watchfulness.

Little did they suspect His competence to take care of Himself.

For three days they search.

So if we have lost Christ, we need to search after Him.

\* "Stier's Words of the Lord Jesus," Vol. I., pp. 18—27.

If lost pearl of great price we shall be poor indeed.

Let us not, however, sit down in despair.

Let us seek after Him while we sorrow.

Yet well ask, whose fault is it?

No right to reproach Him as Mary does here.

Our own sin has caused Him to hide Himself.

The *text*, no language for our sin polluted lips.

Rather gird up loins and go forth to seek Him.

Seek Him then in prayer—in study of word—in public assemblies—in various ordinances.

Seek Him with earnest desire, and you will at last find Him.

## II. THE CHILD'S REPLY, v. 49.

His question also betrays surprise.

He gives His parents a gentle, yet awakening lesson concerning their whole past parental relation to Him.

In simplicity of His holy childhood puts pertinent questions. Amidst doctors already gave indications of His subsequent sagacity.

His questions to them a pre-intimation of His subsequent mode of asking, "How is it then written in the Scriptures?"

—Luke x. 21.

But His question to Mary reveals His dawning self consciousness.

This a distinctive crisis, for now "a Son of the law."

That law was to be magnified by Him—thus reason for His artless surprise. *Text*.

His two questions are counter questions to those of Mary.

Exhibit His intuitive insight into His parent's motives.

His divine relationship once recognized, now appears natural.

Joseph and Mary ought not to have needed information about it.

No wonder He says, "How is it that *ye* sought me?"

Joseph's silence betrays his consciousness of Divine mystery.

Still His growth had been strictly in accordance with human analogy.

They could not rise above their mere human ideas.

Hence their mistake in seeking Him anywhere but in His Father's house, and in sorrowing for Him.

But notice His pointed answer to last part.

"Thy Father," says Mary, pointing to Joseph; "My Father," He replies, looking up to God.

The first recorded utterance of the God-Man is "Abba Father."

The spirit-taught cry of the child, to which the Old Testament word only an approximation. Deut. xxxii. 6 ; Matt. ii. 10.

"My Father," too, by which He disowns kindred with first Adam.

Perceives Himself the Son of the invisible Jehovah.

Sets aside Joseph's paternity from first to last. Comp. Matt. xxii. 42.

For eighteen more years He submits to it ; then it ceases.

Then the mother is addressed as "Woman," and "My Father" is constantly heard, till He cries, Luke xxiii. 4, 6.

Once more, observe emphasis on "must."

A word often used by Christ. Comp. Luke xxiv. 26.

"In my Father's house." Where else could the Son find Himself at home ?

Sanctifying that house by His presence. Mal. ii. 9.

Thus He justifies His remaining behind.

"I must" absolves Him from charge of unfilial conduct.

Glance at His occupation, learning in His Father's school.

Though inwardly taught (Comp. John vi. 45), yet not without human aid—His mother—the Jewish doctors.

The Scriptures the groundwork of His studies.

Hence His eagerness, for He was inquiring concerning Himself.

Thus He was "about His Father's business."

To this His whole life was devoted.

Why should His parents have sought Him sorrowing ?

John xvi. 32, *ult.*

These thoughts suggested by this first recorded utterance of "the Word."

We may not have caught all the fulness of its meaning.

Enough, however, to stimulate to follow His example.

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### ISAIAH'S REPORT.

"Who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed."—Isaiah liii. 1.

The credulity of mankind on certain subjects.

Willing to believe what suits interests or congenial to disposition.

Seen in Papist, Socinian, worldling. Jer. v. 31.

In vain we plead, warn, entreat.

Our efforts as vain as those of Lot with sons-in-law.  
Compelled to exclaim, *text*.

Hitherto Isaiah had seen splendid visions of Messiah.  
Had seen Him as Immanuel—ix. 6 ; xi. 6.

As conqueror of death. Ch. xxv.

As lifting up standard to nations, xlix. 23.

These tidings he knew his countrymen would gladly believe.

But now sees Messiah smitten, despised, slain.

Foreseeing the reception such tidings would receive, he  
cries, *text*.

## I. THE REPORT.

This refers to this chapter, and two verses of preceding.  
Relates to three points :

### (1.) His Person.

Not now as lofty cedar, but as "root out of dry ground."

Hints at His want of personal beauty.

Theories of men on this subject, but prophet says lii. 14.

Natural result of extreme suffering.

But he goes still further, v. 3 (margin).

As leper hiding face ; fulfilled in "behold the man."\*

### (2.) His office; that of a humble servant.

### (3.) His sufferings; this strangest of all.

Yet after all only what He could naturally expect.

His very presence a rebuke to self-righteous sinners.

Man's evil nature enraged at exhibition of purity, which  
condemns him.

Ishmael will persecute Isaac.

It was thus with prophets whose blood Jerusalem shed like  
water.

The world will love its own, and cry, "Not this man, but  
Barabbas."

## II. THE RECEPTION OF THE REPORT.

Implied in interrogatory form of *text*.

As Elijah said, 1 Kings xix. 14, so Isaiah.

So God Himself speaks to show universal apostacy, Jer. v. 1.

\* Hengstenberg's Christology, vol. ii. p. 280.

Yet strange for *Israel* to act so basely.  
Prophet pained at contrast implied in lii. 15.

**(1.) The tidings as to His Person they would not receive.**

“Man looks at the outward appearance.”  
Forgets qualities of heart present intrinsic beauty.  
Illustrated in 1 Sam x. 23, 24, and xvi. 6.  
The sinfulness of such homage.  
Christ no such beauty; evangelists give no hint of His  
personal appearance as biographers are careful to do.  
Yet the believer knows He is lovely. Isaiah xxxiii. 17.  
The beauty of His example, His love, His holiness.  
“What think ye of Christ?”

**(2.) Tidings respecting His Office not acceptable.**

Man disdains a master who is only a servant.  
Some may enlist under His banner as general. Isaiah lv. 4.  
Glory of victory shared by meanest soldier.  
Credit assumed for contributing to that victory.  
But no room for pride, in Christ as servant bearing burden  
of sin.

**(3.) Report most offensive, in witnessing to Sufferings.**

Irritating that master should die a felon's death.  
Sensitive to the attacks of ridicule.  
Followers of Nazarene, Crucified One, Christians. Acts  
xi. 26. Comp. 1 Pet. iv. 15, 16.  
Distasteful from another cause.  
The disciple must be as Lord, and self-love shrinks from  
suffering.  
This at the root of Peter's presumption. Matt. xvi. 22-24.  
The cross an offence; “a hard saying who can bear it.”

### III. THE CAUSE OF THAT RECEPTION.

Christ, like His kingdom, comes “not with outward observa-  
tion.”  
His beauty not material but spiritual.  
Second clause of *text* reveals secret of man's rejection.  
Faith must be given us by God.  
Christ the arm of the Lord. Is. lii. 10.  
That arm made bare in Gospel. Rom. i. 16.

Yet how many, as travellers to Emmaus see Him not.  
 Even His miracles failed to convince. John xii. 37-40.  
 Alas! some a lasting blindness seals.  
 A lesson of humility.  
 We must become babes in His school.  
 Need of self-examination.  
 Have you faith to recognize Him?

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### THE MARRIAGE AT CANA.\*

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him."—John ii. 11.

Manifestation of Christ's glory, 1st to Magi, 2nd to Rabbis.  
 Not the only pre-intimations of His glory. Comp. Luke iii. 22, John i. 29 and 49.  
 Expectations excited, especially in Mary.  
 Now He *begins*—first of series of signs.  
 Proclaims falsehood of miracles of Apocryphal Gospels.  
 This fitting inauguration of His work on earth.  
 In one sense His long obscurity a prior miracle.  
 To us testifies of deliberation characteristic of Deity.  
 But His contemporaries needed a sign.  
 Manifests glory, not as Moses, by miracle of judgment.  
 Wrought to strengthen faith of disciples.  
 Verses 1 and 2. Significance of first miracle at marriage festival.  
 Bridegroom of Church foresaw contempt of marriage.  
 Happy marriage festival where Christ a guest.  
 Marriage a joyous ordinance.  
 Christ's presence also an intimation of tenor of future ministry.  
 No stern wilderness preacher like John.  
 Contrast Christ's conduct and Pharisaic indolence.  
 If Eccles. iii. 4, take care times hallowed.  
 Innocent amusements not to be frowned down.  
 A protest against false religiosity, which forgets John xvii. 15.  
 Notice Mary's remark, v. 3.  
 Pass on to Christ's reply, v. 4. It startles us!

\* *Vide* Archbishop Trench's work on the Miracles.



He had already disowned paternity of Joseph. Luke ii. 49.  
 Now He is "anointed," earthly ties cease, mother becomes  
 "woman."

Comp. Matt. xii. 46-50, and Luke xi. 27, 28,  
 No shame or insult implied in "woman." Compare John  
 xix. 26.

But otherwise in, "What have I to do with thee?"

Standing protest against Romish Mariolatry.

Mary only a woman—sinful—needing Saviour.

"Mine hour"—not of passion, John vii. 30, but of opportunity.

Teaches Mary that her motherly influence out of place here.

Still deeper meaning as directed against error of Luke xiv. 15.

His thoughts revert to Gen. xlix. 11.

Festival at Cana, type of future marriage with Church.

His "hour" of triumph will assuredly come.

Glance at Mary's confidence, implied in v. 5.

Notice Christ graciously supplying even superfluities.

Yet ministering to drunkenness!

Supplies perilous quantity, 126 gallons!

Obstinate fact, not to be set aside by the theory, that the  
 wine was not intoxicating.

Here makes common bounties witness to His liberality in  
 grace.

No plea for the drunkard.

Man perfected by victory in temptation, not by exemption  
 from it.

Want grace to exercise self-denial and restraint.

Touch on courtesy of Christ in recognition of "Ruler  
 of Feast."

Ruler's answer, v. 10, a deeper meaning than he imagined.

World gives best wine first, then enjoyment fled.

Prodigal eats at last of husks.

World's gifts like prophet's roll.

Such is the world's gay garish feast,  
 In her first charming bowl  
 Infusing all that fires the breast,  
 And cheats the unstable soul.

And still as loud the revel swells,  
 The fever'd pulse beats higher,  
 Till the sear'd taste from foulest wells,  
 Is fain to slake its fire.\*

\* Keble's Christian Year.

Address young.

Youth demands amusement, but Eccles. xi. 9.

Are there no higher pleasures?

World's pleasures cloy, then disappointments, &c.

Acquire taste for pleasures Christ gives.

Why should we fear, youth's draught of joy,

If pure, would sparkle less?

Why should the cup the sooner cloy

Which God hath deigned to bless?

Eternity will prove truth of "Kept good wine till now."

### A COMMANDMENT WITH PROMISE.

"Incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Is. lv. 3."

At a time of national disaster Isaiah points to glorious future.

The Gospel preached to Israel as a future good.

But as read chapter liii., might say Acts viii. 34.

We however see connection between it and following chapters.

Result of Christ's atonement in calling of Gentiles in chap. liv.

From it also results perpetuity of blessing described in this chapter.

But prophet also dwells on condition to be observed.

If God's hand stretched to bestow, man's must be stretched to receive.

Therefore, "repent and believe the Gospel" or *teet*.

### I. THE COMMANDMENT.

A voice from heaven calling and saying

(1.) "Incline your ear." External senses, avenues of perception.

Spiritual truth needs a spiritual sense, but the external sense is the first channel.

"Faith cometh by hearing."

God works by natural laws—appoints means.

But carnal mind gives no heed to divine things.

"He that hath ears to hear let him hear," but Ps. lvi. 4, 5.

Heed the exhortation now. No trifling matter.

God says, "Come now and let us reason together," but Prov. i. 24.

God calls from unsatisfying food.

He calls to consider how suitable His plan of salvation.

He calls to reflect on bliss in store for those who love Him.

Consider who makes this appeal.

(2.) "Come unto Me." Man estranged from God.

Like prodigal left his Father's house, but God says, Jer. iii. 12.

Come to me in repentance, Ps. li. 4.

Come to me in faith.

All my promises, "yea, and amen in Christ Jesus," and now make this :

## II. THE PROMISE.

Promise of eternal life to members of Covenant.

(1.) "Your soul shall live."

Peculiar phrase frequently used in Scripture.

Seems a truism, for the soul must live.

But life without God, is like a living tomb.

The soul formed to seek after God.

Sin has blinded man to true object of existence.

It has erected wall of separation between God and him.

A sense of guilt thus clings to soul.

"Dead in trespasses and sins," faculties incapable of being exercised in right direction.

This perpetuated throughout eternity.

From this deliverance offered, *text*.

Jesus speaks to dead souls. John v. 25.

His words beget new hopes, &c. for John vi. 63.

Voice of Jesus as mighty now as ever.

The Church a witness of fulfilment of *text*.

God adding to Church daily such as should be saved.

Fulfilled to individual, when say, Rom. viii. 2.

Come to Him.—"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

(2.) "I will make an everlasting covenant," &c.

Condescension in manner in which God makes promises.

His mere word ought to be a sufficient guarantee.

But adopts other methods to confirm Word. Heb. vi. 18.

So here places Himself under covenant engagements.

This covenant made with Christ, interest in it realized  
when called by grace.

An everlasting covenant.

A covenant of mercies, pardoning, restraining, sustaining.

Their value seen in expression, "Sure mercies of David."

God's covenant with David peculiarly binding.

Ps. lxxxix. a record of it, vs. 3, 4, 28, 33-36.

Their preciousness felt by Solomon. 2 Chron. vi. 42.

And by Jeremiah xxxiii. 20, 21.

Yet uttered when Sun of David's glory eclipsed, Ps. lxxxix.  
38, 39.

But fulfilled in Christ.

The mercies of David are resurrection mercies, Acts xiii. 34.

Thus see connection of two parts of promise of *text*.

Life ours by virtue of union with Christ.

His resurrection removed last obstacle to outpouring of grace  
and mercy.

We confidently repose souls on true David.

The promise repeated to-day.

Alas! that so noble an offer should meet so cold a reception.

Come to Him who makes this offer.

### THE FRUIT OF THE LIPS.

"I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off and to  
him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him."—Is. lvii. 19.

Grace begins with God and proceeds to deal with man.

By nature man dead, but quickened by Spirit.

As voice of Jesus penetrated tomb of Lazarus, so sinner's  
heart.

By grace enabled to respond to "return." Mal. iii. 7.

Then plead for larger bestowal of grace, "turn Thou us,  
O Lord, &c."

Here prophet remonstrating with Israel.

Demands of idolatry unnatural and cruel.

When complied with, no peace obtained.

But God interposes in grace.

Commissions heralds of grace to remove stumbling-blocks,  
v. 14.

When humbled makes promise, v. 15.

God girded Himself for strange work, to give peace. *Text.*

**I. A MESSAGE OF COMFORT.**

Consciousness of guilt destroys peace.

Hence world full of apprehension of evil to come.

As disease has an irritating effect on system, so sin on the soul

Therefore this announcement consoling.

An anticipation of angelic anthem. Luke ii. 14.

Tells of remedy to restore health. Health and peace in Hebrew from same root.

Healing and peace here connected, and in Jer. iv. 14.

Luther's saying, "No man can enjoy peace, except things are with him as they should be."

Peace, the rest of the soul, realized through Christ.

No peace like this, therefore repeated "peace, peace," chap. xxii. 3.

Liable to no interruptions, chap. xlviii. 18.

Includes all kinds, peace with God, Rom. v. 1., peace of conscience, Phil. 1, 7, and peace with man, Rom. xii. 18.

None can give it like Christ. John xiv. 27.

And this because Christ is our peace. Chap. xxxii. 2. Micah v. 5.

It can only rest on a basis of positive righteousness. Eph. ii. 14, 15.

This verse a commentary on *text*.

Peace effected both for Gentile and Jew.

The Divine amnesty is of universal benefit.

To you it is this day proclaimed.

**II. A MESSAGE OF RENEWAL. "I will heal him."**

All disease the direct result of sin.

Leprosy especially selected to symbolize sin.

None but God could heal it.

So here God takes diseased patient in hand.

"The God of the living" delivers from death.

Christ the death of death.

He speaks, and listening to His voice,

New life the dead receive,

The mournful broken hearts rejoice

The humble poor believe.

Awakens sin-stricken faculties from torpidity.

Imparts to believer joyous sense of fresh life.

Gives him to eat of "the tree of life."

### III. A MESSAGE OF THANKFULNESS. "I create the fruit of the lips."

One thus restored must find tongue loosed.  
 When God speaks peace, we should speak praise, Ps. lxi. 16.  
 The tongue an index of the heart.  
 Ingratitude, an epitome of all vices, the climax of injustice.  
 "Ingratitude is a monster in nature, a solecism in manners, a paradox in grace, damning up the course of donations, divine and human."  
 God desires "fruit of lips" for Ps. l. 23.  
 He is Christless who is voluble in craving mercies, but slow in returning praise.  
 Possessed of dumb devil not cast out.  
 God must *create* fruit of lips, for tongue "an unruly evil."  
 Hence, Hos. xiv. 2. Comp. Heb. xiii. 5.  
 God alone can enable us to offer this sacrifice.  
 Then discrown ourselves, become footstool for God to ascend throne.  
 Proclaims our fitness for heaven Rev. iv. 10.  
 How precious the fruit of Christ's lips.  
 If not tasted it you may well say, Jer. viii. 22.  
 Yet Christ has provided a balm.  
 Accept His proffered grace.

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### CHRISTIAN RETALIATION.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."—Rom. xii. 21.

The injunction plain and obvious.  
 Yet hard command—Christian duty no child's play.  
 Need patience to endure, and yet *so* endure as to conquer.  
 Trouble rife—evil of own heart—provocations of ungodly.  
 As disciples, learn that revenge proclaims its own defeat.  
 But Apostle points out vs. 19, 20. Then adds *text*.

#### I. ITS PRINCIPLE.

The Christian acts on principle, that of God.  
 When creation marred by evil, was he overcome by it? No,  
 He acted in grace.

\* Trapp.

Set Himself to redress, not with instruments of evil, but of love.

He sent His Son.

This God's principle of acting—heaping coals of fire.

So must we. Col. iii. 12, 13.

The principle of grace, as Matt. v. 44, 45.

## II. ITS IMPORT.

Inquire when overcome of evil, and when not.

Overcome, when lay hands on property, or life, or reputation of another.

Apt to brood over injury—nurture wrath—wipe out affront.

Revenge sweet—cherished for years.

When gratified, men breathe freely, forgetting they are “overcome.”

But “overcome evil” when bridle anger.

A nobility in power which forbears to retaliate.

Fretfulness, as spoiled child, says, “I do well to be angry.”

Passions tyrannize, as Milton's fiend, “Which way I fly is hell, myself am hell.”

But magnanimity in restraining malevolent passions.

Prov. xvi. 32—contrast Christ, John xviii. 23, and Paul, Acts xxiii. 3.

But further, see triumph of love in returning good for evil.

David in Engedi, 1 Sam. xxiv. 17, a true conqueror.

Draw general conclusion.

While in the world, there will be periods of gloom and despondency.

Never crushed by their weight if like Paul, Acts xxiv. 2.

Even Matthew felt this. Comp. Horace Lib. iii., Carm. iii.

So 2 Cor. i. 8, 9.

If patience maintained, we are victorious even while evil celebrating its triumph.

But if turn aside from duty we are overcome.

Easy to furnish illustrations.

Show when overcome by sin of unbelief, of impatience, of unfaithfulness.

In short, if hold fast integrity, triumph though die ; but if not, we are overcome though crush adversary.

But inquire further, how shall we overcome evil ?

Partially, when not suffer it to injure our souls.

Also by kindness, patience, love.

A strange method this of "stooping to conquer."  
 "An eye for an eye" the law, till Jesus came to give a better.  
 Showed how victory attends this new law. John xii. 32.  
 Draws not by eloquence, nor by force, but by dying.  
 Paradoxes on this truth abound in N. T. 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

### III. ITS EXCELLENCE.

Simple yet profoundly wise. For it

(1.) Counteracts our bad propensities.

In sin, mind like kingdom in insurrection. Rom. vii. 24.  
 But if overcome evil, then the Lord's freeman.

(2.) Illustrates our conformity to Christ.

His whole life a carrying out of this injunction.  
 His prayer for His murderers. Luke xxiii. 34.  
 His charge to His disciples. Luke xxiv. 47.  
 His selection of Saul of Tarsus.

(3.) Gives a foretaste of heaven.

A disturbed kingdom miserable.  
 So man, when overcome of evil. James iii. 16.  
 But if overcome evil, we have songs in house of pilgrimage.  
 Enjoy in anticipation, serenity of repose.

How carry out injunction.

Realize interest in Christ.  
 Take serious views of your own unprofitableness.  
 Make much of the grace of God.  
 Pray for the Holy Spirit.

### THE PRIVILEGE AND DUTY OF BELIEVERS.

"Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."—  
 Isaiah lxii. part of 6 and 7.

Isaiah gives picture of glories of Messiah's kingdom.  
 An outline, yet often elaborate picture.  
 March of Messiah's Conquests, till Ps. lxxii. 11.  
 Church the instrument, as 2 Pet. i. 19.  
 But prophet sees her equipped. Is. lx. 1.  
 Existing condition of Israel, forms dark back ground of picture.



Assyrian invasion repelled, but canker still eating.

But now, v. 4.

Contrast too Jer. v. 30, 31, with v. 6, Ps. lxxviii. 2.

Then follows *text*.

“Remembrancers” may refer to “Watchmen,” or people over whom watch.

Latter sense here, setting forth privilege and duty of believers, who have ;

## I. A TITLE CONFERRED UPON THEM.

Prophet appeals to them as distinct class.

Title no new one. Gen. iv. 26.

A separation between Church and world.

World's aim to break down barrier.

Hence when Spirit promised, more decided stand ensured.

Isaiah xlix. 3—5.

Not timid followers, still less neutrals.

By consistent walk, &c.

But margin has “remembrancers.”

(1.) **They remember God themselves.**

Dont give way to prevailing atheism.

More careful in proportion to degeneracy of age.

(2.) **Remind others of Him.**

Appeal to careless sinners.

(3.) **Remind God of His promises.**

Recorded in Word for comfort.

When appreciate them by meditation, stirred up to ask fulfilment.

Then rise to a kind of equality with God.

## II. A DUTY IMPOSED UPON THEM.

Enlightened to appreciate wisdom of God's designs.

Clear idea { (1). Of object.  
(2). Of means by which accomplished.

(1.) **The Object “to Establish, &c.”**

Jerusalem a representative city, symbolical.

Israel a pattern people.

Not traders as Phœnicians, scholars as Greeks, nor soldiers as Romans.

By means of the law, to be examples of righteousness.

Light of example concentrated in Jerusalem.

Contrast would lead heathen to inquire.

Then prophecy fulfilled. Isaiah ii. 2, 3.

Then "a praise," a blessing to world.

But Jerusalem failed. Isaiah v. 7.

But Church succeeds. Define it.

Its mission.

Many unworthy members.

Visible and invisible Church.

Former split into sects.

Yet union between them maintained in Christ.

Hostility in proportion to corruption of faith.

Church's interest to "hold fast form of sound words."

Even debased Christian principles exert an ameliorating influence.

Our prayer that she may be kept pure.

Then proves an aggressive organization, looking on world as implicitly vanquished.\*

Then "a praise" as instrument in God's hands.

#### (1.) *The Means—Prayer.*

God retains in own control vivifying power.

Organization may be perfect and agents zealous, but  
1 Cor. iii. 6.

Must realize this to derive benefit from means of grace.

The promise sure, Is. lv. 10, 11. God says plead with me.

Prayer must be importunate, persevering, courageous.

Parable of unjust Judge.

Remember prayer and labour go together.

#### GOD'S TEMPLE ON EARTH.

"Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."—Is. lxvi. 1—2.

The temple occupied a prominent place under Judaism.

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption, § 143.

Built to be a symbol of God's indwelling among men.  
 This only fully realized in the Lord Jesus Christ.  
 But typified by tabernacle, suited to nomadic habits of the people.

Cloud of glory, &c., testified to reality of God's presence.  
 When settled in Canaan such a shifting tent unsuitable.  
 Jerusalem appointed as seat of worship, in opposition to practices of polytheism.

Unity of Jehovah symbolized in Solomon's temple.  
 But Jews imbibed false and superstitious views regarding it.  
 Imagined God must dwell in it, no matter how wicked they were.

This prompted their fanatical resistance to Titus.  
 Against such views the prophet here protests. *Text.*

## I. WHAT GOD'S TEMPLE IS NOT.

It is not any mere material fabric.  
 Tendency to associate God's presence with venerated ecclesiastical pile, widely diffused.  
 Places from which profane world shut out.  
 When enter cathedral, and stand—

“Beneath the high embowered roof,  
 With antic pillars, massive roof,  
 And storied windows richly dight,  
 Shedding a dim religious light”\*

disposed to say with Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 17.  
 Yet this conception false and misleading.  
 Prophet shows folly of it, *text (first part)*.  
 No material fabric a suitable dwelling for God.  
 The spiritual mind discerns His presence everywhere ; can say—

“There lives and works  
 A soul in all things, and that soul is God.”

Could have provided Himself a House if necessary.  
 Then why direct Moses and Solomon to erect one?  
 Answer, to meet want in man's nature.  
 Though sinners, God follows us, saying, “I will dwell among you.”  
 Therefore Exod. xxv. 8, and cautioned to make after pattern.  
 Thus tabernacle a standing symbol of important spiritual truths.

\* Milton.

Typifies first, Christ as the temple, and then believers.  
Eph. ii. 22.

This truth, however, only discerned by the spiritually minded.  
To carnal minds, material emblems appeal in vain, only  
attempt to localize God's presence and materialize His  
person.

Witness Church of Rome fostering idolatry—connecting  
salvation with union with visible Church—teaching  
transubstantiation.

Witness, too, many in our own Church, attaching supersti-  
tious veneration to chancel, &c.—consecrating elements  
with back to congregation, gorgeous ritual, &c.

Used as incantations to bring God within walls—before the  
senses.

If Christians thus captivated, was it wonderful if Jews?

Proud of temple, so that even disciples, Mark xiii. 1.

Forgot erected by a base Idumean Herod, though David  
unworthy because hands stained with blood.

Forgot warnings of prophet, Jer. vii., 11—14.

Forgot also comforting announcement of another. Hagg.  
ii. 9.

Yet guardians of sacred shrine thrust Him out.

Now that, casket rifled of jewel, imagined God could still  
be found in it.

Imagined it could not be destroyed, accused Stephen of  
blasphemy for saying so.

The first Christian Apologist points to past history and  
*text*. Acts vii. 48—51.

## II. WHAT GOD'S TEMPLE IS. *Text (last part.)*

“Here,” God says, “will I dwell, for I have a delight  
therein.”

For this formed man in His own image.

Provided not only body, but reason, conscience, and soul.

Viewed complacently by His Maker. Job. xxxviii. 7., Prov.  
viii. 31.

But sin dethroned God, now “Ichabod.”

Pride made him a god to himself.

This pride must be expelled, or no temple for God. *Text*.

Hence this the first office of Holy Spirit. John xvi. 8.

Then becomes a witness for God, a consistent follower of  
Christ.

In Christ we see true temple. John iv. 34, v. 19.

Here see the kind of character God seeks in man.

One who is "poor," sensible of His own deficiencies.

"Contrite." 2 Cor. vii. 10.

"Trembles at word," with Samuel says, "Speak Lord for thy servant heareth."

Here then see materials for true temple.

If palace of sovereign a place of honour, what say of this temple?

Ambition spurs men to reach pinnacle of greatness.

But look at prophet's picture, and say can the warrior, or statesman, or merchant, or student, furnish anything so lofty.

He sleeps in God's arms, works in God's strength, weeps on God's bosom, banquets at God's table.

In sanctuary wants no gorgeous religious ceremonial, for Holy Spirit gives unction to petitions he utters, and meaning to sermon to which he listens.

If debarred from public worship, finds God "a little sanctuary."

Consider then this honour and humble yourselves.

Put pride away, and say with publican, Luke xviii. 13.

Then will God dwell in you, and cause you to reign with Him.

Carry about with you sense of God's presence.

Its safeguard in temptation. 1 Cor. ii. 19.

Source of happiness here till Lord of temple takes you to city. Rev. xxii. 22.

### THE STILLING OF THE TEMPEST.

"And when He was entered into a ship His disciples followed Him. And behold there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but He was asleep. And his disciples came to Him and awoke Him saying, Lord, save us; we perish. And He saith unto them, why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him." Matt. viii. 23—27.

Incidents of our Lord's life not merely historical, but also typical and prophetic.

Every action of the God-man possesses a profound significance.

We must look below the surface narrative.

Find lessons for every age of the Church. Such here.

Impression produced by the Sermon on the Mount.

Deepened by His subsequent miracles.

Crowd increased till, v. 18.

This His command, when He sees men actuated by carnal motives.

A figure of all His leadings ; of Israel, of His Church, and of individual believers.

"To the other side," a watchword of faith, of love, of courage.\*

Not given to all to follow Him "to the other side."

So the scribe in v. 19, and the disciple in v. 21.

But His true disciples obey, while doing so this incident occurs.

### **I. THE TERROR OF THE DISCIPLES.—vs. 23—25.**

Need to entertain just ideas of the nature of Christ's miracles.

Rationalism treats this as a mere passing squall.

But all three evangelists relate intense terror of disciples.

Men familiar with the lake—good sailors.

Dwell on symbolism of tempest occurring at close of such a glorious day.

Disciples proud to acknowledge Jesus as their Master, and to receive Him into their boat.

Now former elation of spirit gone as see jeopardy.

So with Christian life.

Times when Jesus gladdens hearts of His people, so that like Peter on the mount of ecstasy. Matt. xvii. 4.

But no, they have yet to wrestle with sin, &c.

Quick alternations of joy and sorrow, as 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Well to acquaint selves with steadfastness of Christ's love. Ps. lxxiii. 23.

But another lesson ; storm occurs in Christ's company.

In presence of object of love, fear of calamity usually banished.

So sisters of Bethany. John xi. 21.

But now storm bursts when Christ with them.

Yet nothing strange in this.

When believers walk closely with Christ, find Satan's malice excited.

Ought not to be terrified at such assaults.

Need to prove ourselves servants of Christ. 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5.

\* Vide Lange in loco

Then faithless heart imagines Christ asleep.  
 Good to be thus tried, to learn wonders our Lord worketh.  
 So when Church is engulfed in affliction, the Lord "awakes  
 as one out of sleep," so that she can say, Ps. xlvi. 5.

## II. THE SELF POSSESSION AND AUTHORITY OF JESUS.—Vs. 25, 26.

Sleep evidence of His perfect humanity.  
 Participates in infirmities of our mortal nature.  
 The only place where special mention is made of His sleeping.  
 A sleep full of majesty—a sabbatic rest after glorious  
 labours—a sign of calm of peaceful conscience.  
 Men have slept like Jonah, but *this* illustrates, Ps. cxxvii. 2.  
 Yet He never oversleeps Himself.  
 No helpless Baal who cannot be awakened.  
 Verse 25. Mark the self-possession of that awaking.  
 Picture ordinary man awaking under such circumstances.  
 But, v. 20., first stills tempest in disciples hearts.  
 As if pointing to connection of sin in man and convulsions  
 in nature.  
 Removes root of sin in disciples, before corrects evil in nature.  
 Anticipating time when He will make all things new.  
 "Why fearful?" They had no need to be.  
 Sinners need to fear, Is. xxxiii., 14, but Ps. cxxv. 1.  
 Fearfulness and little faith always go together.  
 Contrast Cæsar's confidence, "fear not for you carry Cæsar  
 and his fortunes."  
 Hence our confidence as members of Christ's Church.  
 When tempest lowers, prayer our resort. Is. lix. 19.  
 Ezekiel's galley (xxvii. 26) perishes, not so the Church.\*  
 We have a sleepless pilot to steer.

"Begone unbelief, my Saviour is near,  
 And for my relief will surely appear;  
 By prayer let me wrestle, and he will perform,  
 With Christ in the vessel I smile at the storm."

Now sets His seal to His loving rebuke.  
 To the disciples speaks as the God of grace, to the storm as  
 the God of nature.  
 Acts in the same way, as in Exod. xiv. 13 and 27.  
 As prince of peace, says "peace be still."  
 A motto for the Church in times of distress.

\* Vide Trench on Miracles.

Flee to Him and say,

Speak to our warring passions "peace,"  
Say to our trembling hearts "be still."

### III. THE EFFECT PRODUCED UPON THE DISCIPLES.—V. 27.

What other effect could be produced ?

The same divine Being spoken of in Prov. viii. 29.

Jesus unaffected by their outcry of astonishment.

Must have bound them more closely to their master.

Still producing the same effect by the power of His Spirit.

We are all sailing over life's tempestuous sea.

Need to receive Jesus as our pilot.

Then we have a sure place of refuge. Ps. lxiii. 26.

### JOB'S CREED.

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."—Job. xix. 25.

Sorrow the common lot of all—nothing new in it.

"They saw whatever thou hast seen,  
Encountered all that troubles thee,  
They were—whatever thou hast been,  
They are—what thou shalt be."\*

The book of Job contains oldest statement of human troubles.

It has been said that "religious experience is merely the fictitious creation of a polished age."

Answered by this record of the perplexities of an earnest soul.

Great problem of life presented for Job to solve.

Though innocent, he found himself involved in misery.  
vii. 12—20.

His friends only made matters worse.

He appeals in his despair to God. *Text.*

Know not exact views of patriarch's respecting a coming Saviour.

Some say Job here merely asserts he has a vindicator in God.

But remembering John viii. 56, let us view it as Job's creed.

\* The Common Lot, by James Montgomery.



# I. HIS BELIEF IN HIS REDEEMER'S EXISTENCE.

Word here used is a peculiar one—goel.

The kinsman whose duty it was to redeem forfeited property of his less fortunate relation. Levit. xxv. 25.

Comp. Ruth iv. 4.

Here we see steadfastness of patriarch's faith.

Contrast his previous complaints. Vs. 13—19.

Yet I know my kinsman liveth—a brother born for adversity.

He had craved for sympathy, v. 21, but xvi. 2.

Yet now his fretfulness is quieted as *text*.

So we have an ever-living kinsman.

Troubled believer ! He has long watched thy struggle.

Our sorrows noted in His book, our tears put into His bottle.

He continues now the same as when He wept at the grave of Lazarus.

Who needs be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow, Isai. lxvi. 13.

But He is my judge, since He is my kinsman.

Job's friends had arrived at false conclusions, iv. 7.

But Job could say with St. Paul. 1 Cor. iv. 3—4.

He appeals from wrangles of counsel at the bar, to decision of Judge on the bench.

That decision he knew would be right. Gen. xviii. 25.

So we have cause for thankfulness. John v. 27.

In Him mercy is enthroned in the place of judgment.

Our Judge has fought with world's sin—is touched with feeling of our infirmities—exercises compassion towards brethren.

Our duty now not to criticize others, but to examine ourselves.

Now take the word as it stands, " My Redeemer."

Job, while defending himself, knew well he was a sinner.

He knew God orders all things well, v. 6.

He knew his sovereign right to withdraw his gifts, i. 21.

He knew his own corrupt nature, ix. 30—31.

But he sees his Redeemer coming forward.

Though, xvii. 14, he knew death could not always prey on his body for ; *text*.

Christ is our Redeemer, 1 Pet. i. 18—19.

He is a living Redeemer—preparing mansions and people for them.

He is the pole-star by which steer our tossed bark.  
 Sufferings trouble us not, for our Head passed triumphantly  
 through them.  
 They trouble us not, for they have now no sting.  
 Our privilege to walk in "way of holiness" He has marked  
 out for us.

## II. HIS BELIEF IN HIS FUTURE ADVENT.

The goel had a sterner office to execute.  
 The champion and avenger of the death of his kinsman.  
 In vain had Job appealed to his friends, v. 2—3.  
 Hard to bear unjust accusations, Ps. xxxv. 15.  
 Job felt it all, but meekly says, "I know my avenger  
 liveth, &c."

How solemn his words in this light.  
 God will ultimately interpose as avenger of His people.  
 Everywhere they see—

"The proud man's frown, the base man's fear.  
 The scorner's laugh and the sufferer's tear."

They seem to look in vain for redress.

"Careless seems the great avenger; history's pages but record  
 One death-grapple in the darkness, 'twixt old systems and the word:  
 Truth for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne—  
 Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown  
 Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."\*

But the believer is patient under wrong, for he can say  
*text.*

He knows judgment is His strange work, therefore slow but  
 sure. Luke xviii. 7.

He will one day interpose as out of the whirlwind to say  
 Ps. xlv. 10.

A fearful amount of work for the great avenger to do.  
 Cain still raises hand against Abel, Ishmael still mocks  
 Isaac.

On which side are you contending.

Jesus has come to you as a kinsman,

He lives as the sovereign Judge of quick and dead.

He offers himself as your Redeemer.

Reject him and what remains—there is an Avenger living.  
 Heb. x. 31.

\* J. R. Lowell.

## THE EFFICACY OF CHRIST'S BLOOD.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"—Heb. ix. 14.

Paul's delicacy in dealing with subject of this Epistle.

His object to show true design of law.

But had to argue with a sensitive, jealous people.

Cheerfully acknowledges important purpose law served.

But if type, *à fortiori* antitype. V. 13 and *text*.

Touch on ordinance of red heifer. Numbers xix.

A dead body rendered unclean, as symbol of sin.

Interrupted intercourse between man and God.

Defilement purged by ashes of heifer. *Text*.

## I. THE OFFERING.

Three words used, "blood of Christ," "Himself," "without spot."

Apostle dwells much on first, v. 12.

Blood played all important part under law.

Because seat of life which sinner has forfeited.

But also pledge of perfect obedience.

Comp. Heb. xii. 4 with Phil. ii. 8.

Christ laid down life which had fulfilled law.

Consequently an offering "without spot."

Surrender of "Himself" in all dignity of His person.

He who could say John viii. 46 and 29, laid self down on altar of cross.

Poured blood infinitely efficacious, for "blood of Christ."

If only blood of man Jesus of Nazareth worthless, for imperfection of creaturehood.

But sacrifice all-sufficient for "holy thing." Luke i. 35.

## II. THE PRIEST.

Christ both priest and victim.

Apostle uses peculiar phrase "through eternal Spirit."

Not Holy Spirit as some copies read.

Important relationship between Holy Spirit and Christ.

In baptism, temptation, miracles and resurrection.

In short Holy Spirit poured out "without measure."

But here "*Eternal* Spirit."

Refer back to sacrifices under law.

The victim a dumb animal, no spirit, no intelligence.\*

The law or supreme will of law-giver gave it whatever efficacy it possessed for "purifying flesh."

Not so Christ—offered Himself with own consent.

John x. 17, 18. Bound by cords of own love, consent of own free spirit.

What kind of consent? Consent of finite spirit?

Consent of infinite omniscient Being.

Full well estimate the ordeal. "Father if it be possible let this cup pass."

Yet not taken by surprise, not adequately considered.

No, offered as "Lamb" by His own will.

Consenting act of perfect self-consciousness makes offering a moral act of absolute worth.

### III. EFFICACY OF THE OFFERING.

Blood of Christ a twofold efficacy *quoad* God and man.

So under law, sprinkled on altar and on worshippers.

The "Water of separation" on latter, teaching two things.

#### (1.) Removing sense of guilt.

Conscience seat of guilt.

Like Adam and Eve hiding themselves, we see sense of guilt.

Defect in best actions.

Titus i. 15. All mental processes vitiated, conscience condemns them on reflection.

Felt keenly when Holy Spirit has awakened sinner.

Impelled to labour to establish righteousness.

But like young ruler, sees yawning void, "What lack I yet?"

Why because no life in such good works.

They are like touching dead body.

But bring it to Christ, realize interest.

#### (2.) Imparting life and strength.

"Living God" frequently, as if to identify Jehovah of Old Testament with Father of Christ.

Reminds that privileges of Israel transferred to Christian Church.

\* Vide Alford in loco.

To betake themselves to Judaism would be therefore to apostatize from Jehovah. Ch. iii. 12.

Here, however, more as an encouragement.

True, Israel's God "the living God," but veiled, kept at distance worshippers.

Now conscience goes in to speak to God within veil.

No external medium needed, ascended High Priest.

What do you know of application of blood?

It ill becomes you to creep languidly.

Come to Jesus.

### THE SOURCE OF TRUE WEALTH.

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich; and He addeth no sorrow with it."—Prov. x. 22.

1 Tim. vi. 10. Though crimes are committed from other motives, yet this true as a general rule.

Do we not know familiar saying, "Every man has his price?"

Whose integrity has not been at times sorely shaken by some glittering bribe?

Our Lord well knew its pernicious influence, therefore, Luke xii. 15.

Infinite wisdom has provided soul with an object capable of satisfying it.

From this covetousness draws it away.

Hence the apostle calls it "idolatry."

It infatuates its victim and makes him a slave. Ecc. iv. 8.

But there are enduring riches worth seeking after.

The blinded sinner cannot appreciate their true value.

As Macedonian suitor appealed from Philip sleeping to Philip waking, so wisdom appeals to us.

"Seek those things that are above," for *text*.

### I. IN WHAT RESPECT DOES "THE BLESSING OF THE LORD MAKE RICH."

It is in reality the only source of wealth.

All we have we owe to Him who giveth, &c., James i. 5.

Men are, however, apt to ascribe their success to themselves.

They talk of their industry, perseverance, punctuality, &c.  
 Hold themselves up as models to young men.  
 A sinful vanity against which cautioned. Deut. viii. 17, 18.  
 A wise man will look to God, since many contingencies  
 arise.  
 Thus spared from falling into sin of Habak. i. 16.  
 It had this effect on Abram. Gen. xiv. 23.  
 They who boast of their own success may find curse on the  
 prosperity.  
 God must be eyed as sole Sovereign. 1 Sam. ii. 7, 8.  
 "The blessing of the Lord" does not necessarily secure  
 worldly prosperity.  
 True, 1 Tim. iv. 8, but this applies to contented poor.  
 He who can say, Ps. xvi. 5, is richer than Croesus.  
 He has a treasure of which the world knows nothing.  
 Godliness adapts him for the present, Luke xii. 15, and  
 qualifies him for the future, 2 Tim. iv. 8.  
 His treasure is in heaven secure from thieves.  
 Paul and Silas singing praises in their dungeon.  
 "Maketh rich" in faith, hope and love.  
 Though poor as Lazarus yet "carried by angels."  
 With this wealth you can solve apostle's paradox, 2 Cor.  
 vi. 10.

## II. THE PECULIAR EXCELLENCE OF THIS WEALTH. "He addeth no sorrow with it."

Tumultuous joy not consistent with true happiness.  
*E.g.*, joy of pardoned criminal—of miser gloating over  
 wealth.  
 Other elements in these cases detract from true happiness.  
 Illust. Achan—Gehazi—Jer. xvii. 11.  
 Men hoard for children who may prove spendthrifts.  
 But here no terrors of guilty conscience.  
 No fears of future misfortunes.  
 If he does sorrow, he does not as those who are "without  
 hope."  
 As child in his father's house, knows "the Lord will pro-  
 vide."  
 Learned to obey apostolic precept. Phil. iv. 6.  
 Confident their father is best judge of what he needs.  
 Thus like Abraham, blessed himself and a blessing to others.  
 Consider worthlessness of world's goods.

"Ah, sluggard, wake, and gull thy soul no more  
 With earth's false pleasure and the world's delight,  
 Whose fruit is fair and pleasing to the sight,  
 But sour in taste, false as the putrid core,  
 Thy flaming glass is gems at her half light,  
 She makes thee seeming rich, but truly poor,  
 She boasts a kernel and bestows a shell,  
 Performs an inch of her half-promised ell,  
 Her words protest a heav'n, her works produce a hell."\*

Turn to Him who is the faithful and true witness.

### THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.

"And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure.—1 John iii. 3.

Doctrines of Scripture suited to human nature.  
 Awaken sensations of pleasure and pain.  
 Point to heaven, hell, and Christ.  
 Thus furnish three grand motives to exertion, love, hope, fear.  
 Love atmosphere of heaven.  
 Fear characteristic of hell.  
 Yet both are emotions familiar to the present world.  
 But hope belongs to this world exclusively.  
 Often more effective than love by appealing to interests.  
 Not so servile as fear, suits rational beings.  
 Of this hope *text* speaks.

### I. THE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC OF A CHRISTIAN.

One "having hope"—but so have all men.  
 Heathen fable of termination of golden age, only hope left behind.  
 The beggar, the invalid, the prisoner—all have hope.  
 How then the characteristic of a Christian?  
 Answer by referring to previous verse.  
 Distinguished from worldly hope by two things.

(1.) By the *stability* of its foundation.

Worldly hopes disappointing.  
 Looking back worldling finds his life has been

\* Quarle's Emblems.

"A painful passage o'er a restless flood,  
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,  
A scene of fancied bliss, and heartfelt care,  
Closing at last in darkness and despair."

But Christian's hope rests on assurance of truth of God.  
Makes him calm, as Job xiv. 14.

Evidence of its security in Christ's resurrection.

Paul at Rome, Acts xxviii. 20. Comp. xxvi. 6, 7; xxiv. 15;  
1 Cor. xv. 14.

What wonder such marked contrast in conduct of world and  
believer?

With former "hope deferred makes heart sick," latter  
"waits for it."

Former says, "while there is life there is hope," latter "has  
hope in his death."

### (2.) By the excellence of its object.

Object of worldling's hope, material prizes.

Are they happy when they have gained them?

Go, ask miser, statesman, &c.

Was Alexander the Great happy, or Cromwell?

"What are your earth-born hopes? False lights that burn but to betray,  
Short-lived delusions, that must flit like morning dream away;  
Soon as eternity has dawned upon the worldling's sight,  
Showing the past, one cheerless void, the future, endless night."

Tasso dying in a convent, hearing of the laureate crown  
conferred upon him at Rome.

But believer is assured of "mansions," an "inheritance,"  
crowns, "rivers of pleasure."

This deathless hope animated Hebrew Christians. Heb. x. 34.  
Moses on Pisgah not disappointed.

"He would not deem the mirage true  
With living waters in his view."

So believer longs for the fulfilment of John xvii. 24.

## II. THE EFFECT IT PRODUCES.

Purity needed, but none in man.

Belongs only to those who, 1 Pet. i. 23.

But work of Holy Spirit needed to make it a "lively hope."

"Purifieth Himself," as Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Effect of worldly hope in contrast with this.



An effect which ceases not this side the grave.

Purifies from excellence of object.

Believer "counts all but dung."

To know God who is "light" and "love."

Ps. lxxxiv. 4. Have they not cause for praise ?

Redeemed, &c.

Honours destined for their enjoyment.

Therefore strive for purity of heart.

### III. THE MODEL AFTER WHICH HE PURIFIES HIMSELF.

Who venture to say that Christ is impure ?

Pure in past eternity—in fulness of time.

Pure when associating with sinners.

Pure in all His offices.

Purity indicated in resurrection.

Purity shines now in heaven.

Such the model.

Made like us that we might be like Him.

Not as Nebuchadnezzar's image, for Christ and His Church  
all the same.

What is your hope ?

### DEATH OF THE WICKED AND THE RIGHTEOUS.

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness ; but the righteous hath hope in his death."—Prov. xiv. 32.

Antithesis much employed in book of Proverbs.

Contrast here like cloud between Egyptians and Israel.

Death like Pharaoh's gaoler, dealing with the butler and  
baker.

All men are mortal, but oh the difference, *text*.

### I. THE DEATH OF THE WICKED.

Here "wicked" not merely the openly profane and vicious.

Mankind divided into two classes. Matt. iii. 18.

Here then is meant the unconverted.

*Text.* Hurried like malefactor to his doom.

Often an awful suddenness about end of ungodly.

But whether this is so or not, death comes at last un-  
expectedly.

The sinner infatuated so that he will not believe God's warnings.

Thus death comes like a creditor long trifled with.

Comes like a thief who laughs at precautions taken.  
1 Thess. v. 3.

Comes like determined foe, making chill grip felt.

Job. xviii. 18. How expressive, applied to "cumberer of ground."

Failed to use this world aright, therefore "chased out."

But unconverted persons meet death peacefully.

Now examine such cases, and judge them fairly.

Sinner deluded himself during life, disease now robbed him of powers of reflection &c.

Desperate man calls for death, yet would shrink from it if taken at his word.

The suicide literally "driven away in his wickedness."

The soldier meets death fearlessly.

World rings with applause, and speculates on his reward above.

Such sacrifices do not secure salvation. 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

Variety of motives prompt men to face death, yet *text* true.

But ask whither are they driven?

Driven out of this world to judgment. Heb. ix. 27.

Driven from society of saints on earth, to damned in hell.

Here tares and wheat grow together.

Driven out of time into eternity.

Time! how thoughtlessly is it wasted!

Driven out of specious pretences of piety.

Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage, &c," applies to hypocritical professors of religion.

"Hypocrite" is an actor—one under a mask.

Death tears off mask and hurries him away. *Text.*

## II. THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

He has a friend in that unknown land to which going.  
Rom. xiv. 9.

Christ the connecting link between the present and the future.

From heaven he sends for His waiting people.

As Jacob's heart revived, Gen. xlv. 27, so believers.

Judgment after death has no terrors for them. Rom. viii. 1.

The Judge is also their Advocate.

Yea He is also their Redeemer.

Hope is assured by knowing they have a safe passage to the other world.

Death is a dark valley, but Ps. xxiii. 4.

Death repugnant to natural feelings, disruption of soul and body.

But no fear, for convoy of angels.

Friends may sorrow around their bed, but glory streaming on dying face.

Death no power over them—even their dust is sacred.

“ Then strong in patience we can wait,  
E'en at the grave's unclosing gate,  
While deep within, death plants our seed,  
For we are then most sure indeed,  
That spring's bright day will bring the hour,  
When our immortal plant shall flower.”

Yet even believer's sun sometimes sets in clouds.

This ought not make us distrustful of Christianity.

Believers are sometimes of despondent turn of mind.

They are, too, often distrustful of themselves.

The nature of the disease has also much to do with it.

The remembrance of youthful sins comes up. Ps. xxv. 7.

Yet such a troubled death-bed better than unconcerned dying of the ungodly.

Such a death-bed is like Zech. xiv. 7.

God will not forsake his shrinking servant. Is. xliii. 2.

To which of these classes do you belong?

## SPIRITUAL SLOTH.

“ Why stand ye here all the day idle ? ” Matt. xx. 6.

The interpretation of this parable has occasioned much dispute.

A glance at some of its topics will show cause for this.

Who are these labourers ? What epochs do the different hours of the day represent ?

What is meant by “ the penny ? ”

If it means eternal life, how and when can its recipients murmur ?

But not dwell on these now.

In passing, point to true key to its interpretation, Ch. xix. 27. Christ gives a clear answer, but proceeds to check hireling spirit it displays.

The reward not of debt but of grace, therefore there can be no glorying, grudging, or murmuring.

The *text* brings before us "spiritual sloth;" consider.

## I. ITS UNREASONABLENESS.

Employment of some kind essential to human happiness.

Employment in Eden, "to dress it and keep it."

Nature even in Paradise needed man's oversight.

Man conscious of responsibility to his Maker.

In fact, absolute idleness an impossibility.

You do indeed see vagrants, having no occupation and seeking none.

Such wretches are a disgrace to our civilization and Christianity.

Present a vivid illustration of the unreasonableness of idleness.

Yet these are only exceptions which prove truth of rule.

"Better to rub than to rust," expresses common sense of humanity.

"The keenest pangs the wretched find,  
Are rapture to the dreary void,  
The leafless desert of the mind,  
The waste of feelings unemployed.  
\* \* \* \* \*

Better to sink beneath the shock  
Than moulder piecemeal on the rock.

But inquire further what kind of work will pay in long run. Only one: viz. promotion of God's glory in salvation of souls.

If in Eden, work necessary, how much more so in world defiled by sin.

We want to people its solitudes with living Christians.

To acquiesce in present state of things is to proclaim our ignorance of design of creation.

True, men may work in worldly calling, but unreasonableness of this shown. Matt. xvi. 26.

God disowns such workers, in effect He says to them *text*.

**II. ITS GUILT.**

The fact of Christ having redeemed us, aggravates guilt.

Jesus has uplifted veil which hid God.

Made atonement for sin, presented example for sinner.

Mark His earnestness. John iv. 32, 34.

So points us to fields of labour, and bids us imbibe His Spirit.

His command, "Son go work to day in my vineyard," and if  
say, I see nothing to do, proved to be a fool. Prov. xvii. 24.

Such persons blind to guilt.

Unconscious of great duty.

A charge to keep I have,

A God to glorify,

A never dying soul to save

And fit it for the sky.

Our salvation ought to be one thing needful. Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Charge of spiritual sloth can never be urged against such.

If you have felt power of Divine grace, you must work.

There is a work for you in your own homes.

To forsake home to join a religious community, is alien to  
the spirit of Christ.

Guilds and brotherhoods and sisterhoods, an offshoot of  
Popery.

Act rather in spirit of Christ's injunction. Mark v. 19.

Act thus, and you will not forget claims of heathen at a  
distance.

Are you thus recognizing Christ's call ?

If not your guilt proclaimed.

**III. ITS DANGER.**

Creation makes sloth unreasonable, and redemption makes  
it guilty.

But also dangerous, from work of Holy Spirit, since an evi-  
dence that He employs others as His instruments.

A slothful spirit speedily acquires increased power when  
yielded to.

Some give entertainments in aid of a charitable object, and  
delude themselves with thinking they are working for  
Christ.

But their own amusement is their primary object, therefore  
disowned by Christ.

Take up cross in spirit of self denial, or in danger of giving  
way to captious disposition.

Thus without pale of Holy Spirit's influence. Rom. viii. 9, ult.  
 Where divine agent at work, throw off chains of sloth.  
 To take no interest in spiritual things is to proclaim yourself  
 a rebel and traitor, by Him who says, Matt. xii. 30.  
 Danger increases with flight of time.  
 To reject Holy Spirit's strivings is to be given over to a  
 reprobate mind, till sentence pronounced. Luke xiii. 7, ult.  
 Death at hand proclaims your danger, *text*.

Christian be wise ! The tide is at its height  
 Which now may waft thee to the wished for shore ;  
 Thy home's away, and swift the moment's flight,  
 The goal, the crown's right on, thine eyes before ;  
 The trumpet calls to gird thee for the fight ;  
 Hark ! now it sounds, but soon shall sound no more.\*

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### THE CHRISTIAN RACE.

" Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize ? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. 1 Cor. ix. 24—25.

The apostle here employs an illustration familiar to his readers.

The Isthmian games were renowned.

The wreath conferred upon the victor with much solemnity.

These games formed the absorbing topic of conversation.

The illustration would commend itself to their understanding and interests. Consider,

#### I. THE RACECOURSE. " Know ye not that they which run in the stadium, &c.

This sets forth the believer's occupation.

Before Christ came, men were sensible of their fallen condition.

The heathen babbled of a celestial country.

But Jesus clearly revealed means to attain to it.

Thus showed us how to regard this world as a stadium.

Heb. xii. 1. Emulation fired competitors in stadium, so we.

\* Philip Quarles.

Some say emulation is unchristian.  
 True, it often degenerates into ambition.  
 This "the vice of noble souls," yet it is nevertheless a vice.

"How like a mounting devil in the heart  
 Rules the unreined ambition ! Let it once  
 But play the monarch, and its haughty brow  
 Glows with a beauty that bewilders thought  
 And unthrones peace for ever. Putting on  
 The very pomp of Lucifer, it turns  
 The heart to ashes, and with not a spring  
 Left in the bosom for the spirit's lip,  
 We look upon our splendour and forget  
 The thirst of which we perish !"\*

But nevertheless there is a true Christian ambition.  
 As emulation implanted in our nature, so it is an essential  
 element of the Christian life.  
 A vision of splendour haunts soul of the believer.  
 Earth regarded by him as the race-course in which he may  
 not linger.  
 Thus viewed by St. Paul. Phil. iii. 13, 14.  
 Yes, we have a race to run, a prize to secure.  
 Not indulge in indolent raptures but gird selves for earnest  
 effort.

## II. THE CONDITIONS OF THE RACE. "So run that ye may obtain."

There are many impediments in the way of the Christian  
 runner.  
 In the Greek stadium only one was crowned, but not so in  
 the Christian race.  
 Yet we must act as if we alone were to receive prize. *Text.*  
 An individualism in religion which we must always remember.  
 But particle "so" has special reference to conditions of race.  
 These alluded to in 2 Tim. ii. 5.  
 What are those conditions ? Eph. ii. 8, 9.  
 Only as self-condemned sinners looking to Jesus can we be  
 saved.  
 "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," is  
 ever the believer's humble confession.  
 You must accept Christ as a present Saviour.  
 Think of it, you are full of doubts and fears.

\* N. P. Willis.

What a load would be removed from your burdened soul.  
 Prov. xv. 15 (ult.) and who has so much reason? Ps. cxix. 32.  
 Christ accepted ensures peace. *Text.*

This the main condition, but there are others.

Draw attention to one in v. 25.

Abstinence from self-indulgence required in Greek athlete.  
 Applies to Christianity which charges us to "deny ourselves."  
 Even believers often ensnared by self-indulgence.

We want to be braced up, to have spiritual nature made robust.

"Temperate" originally signifies to be self-contained or self-controlled.

Believer is one who is "Lord of himself" in best sense of term.

Interesting to observe how the apostle dwells on the principle of "temperance" or self-control in the epistle.

The principle which regulates his own conduct, and ought to have guided Corinthian Christians.

It resolves itself into an enlightened conscience.

Attention to it of great assistance in running race.

Believers apt to draw nice distinctions between what is consistent and inconsistent in duty.

Such debates injure healthiness of spiritual life.

Set the Lord always before you, and then no need to pause in race.

#### **THE PRIZE:** v. 25, ult.

Yet that corruptible crown worth the effort to secure it.  
 But how quickly it faded—how much to detract from enjoyment of the honour it conferred.

How different in our Christian race.

Rewards promised to believers of a spiritual nature.

Language of inspiration confesses its inadequacy to set them fully forth.

Borrowed material symbols for this purpose.

Crown symbol of sovereignty, but qualifying epithets needed.  
 Hence crown of righteousness, of life, of glory, here incorruptible.

For then shadows all disappeared—reign as kings and priests unto God.

Press on then towards the mark.

Departed saints appeal to you.



## THE ORIGIN OF MAN.

"And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."  
—Gen. ii. 7.

Two accounts of creation. Gen. i. and ii. 1—7.

Rationalistic assertion that Moses borrowed from two conflicting sources.

Reply, if true, how invalidate narrative?

But Bible gains by hostile criticism.

Scholars point out that chap. ii. 1—4 belongs to chap. i.

"These are generations" of v. 4, marks transition to 2nd account.

Each account a distinct purpose to serve.

In first God *above* the world.\*

In second God *in* the world.

First	} exhibits	{	God's purpose and man's destiny.
Second			man's choice and God's care.

Second commencement of progressive history.

It had, therefore, to begin anew to show how Fall possible.

The reason furnished by *text*.

These words set forth :

## I. THE ORIGIN OF MAN. Twofold.

## (1.) Material.

Here carried back to threshold of history.

Man the prominent figure.

Account of creation of earth as scene of his existence.

When completed man summoned into being.

Made to understand closer connection with it, than mere resident on its surface, for *text*.

In all this something (a) humbling and (b) sublime.

(a) *Humbling*. Look at bodies, of what made? *Text*.

Though sceptics sneer, confirmed by teaching of experience and investigations of science.

Let breath be withdrawn, "dust to dust."

Pride therefore unbecoming.

\* Kurtz's History of Old Covenant (T. & T. Clark), vol. i. p. xxxviii., Aids to Faith, Essay v., Sect. 5.

Men point to ancestral pedigree, but go back to Adam's origin.

The earth our mother. Job. i. 21.

Folly of fixing affections on it; few feet of consecrated ground all that remains.

Yet men cling, forgetting frail tenure—only lodgers who must go down

"To the vile dust from whence they sprung,  
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

But saints filled with humility as Abraham, Gen. xviii. 27.

So St. Paul, 2 Cor. iv. 7.

Yes, if in Paradise unsteadfast, *à fortiori* now.

(b) *Sublime.*

If original materials poor, workmanship exquisite, and Workman divine.

Contrast in description of formation of animals and man.

Solemn consultation, "let us make man."

"Formed" borrowed from craft of potter. Is. lxiv. 8.

As artistic workman challenges criticism, so God.

Perfection of mechanism of human frame.

"Fearfully and wonderfully made."

(2.) *Spiritual.* "Breathed into nostrils."

Breath expression of inward existing life.

Figurative language; how understood.

Yet idea something attractive and beautiful.

Illust. Elisha stretching self on dead child.

Thus kinship with God established.

Matt. iv. 4., Acts xvii. 28.

Reminds of dependence on God and glorious destiny.

Breath contains immortal principle.

Only by allegiance with God *this* life desirable, and *next* secured.

## II. THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN.

Man now complete organism, "a living soul."

Stands in different category from irrational animals.

True term applied to them, chap. i. 20 (margin).

But participates in faculties such as God exercises.

Docility in lower animals, attachment, instinct.

Yet not to be compared with man.

Each one conscious he is composed of inner and outer man.  
 Even though like ruined palace, capacities of soul displayed.  
 Reason—judgment—conscience.

But go higher still.

God formed man for Himself.

Soul designed to be habitation of Deity.

Though design frustrated, a remedy provided.

God's original right confirmed, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

Grace singles out elect, 2 Cor. xiii. 5 (ult).

Apply, how using soul?

If drudge of body, retribution, "thou fool."

But shrine of Deity.

Cultivate sense of presence, claim promise of Holy Spirit.

### THE FIRST TEMPTATION.

"Yea hath God said."—Gen. iii. 1.

Preceding chapter presents beautiful picture.

Here darker picture ;—serpent.

Need not ask why selected serpent's form.

Reason suggested in v. 1.

Rather attend to conversation.

Contains germ of all impious accusations of Divine Providence, and of all weak and sinful excuses.

First temptation model of every other.

Consider :

### I. THE FORM OF THE TEMPTATION.

Craft of Satan.

Scripture speaks of his "devices," "depths," "wiles."

What chance had Eve against such a foe?

Abruptness of question indicates only substance of conversation given.

Satan artfully draws her on, then affects surprise, saying  
*text.*

Here, then, the *form*—a subtle suggestion.

Cunningly contrived to conceal object—to cast doubt on God's veracity, or make Eve fancy she has misunderstood Him.

Model of all infidel questions.\*

\* Notes on Genesis by C. H. M. (George Morrish.)

From beginning God's Word proclaimed as law. 'Gen. ii. 16, 17.

To question its truth or reasonableness, blasphemy.

Therefore Eve ought to have repelled temptation.

But form so subtle and novel that took strange hold of her.

So still—Word "light to feet."

Evidences of its Divine origin numerous.

Unbelief always suggests, *text*—e.g., likely to emanate from God of love? Have you not mistaken its scope and design? &c.

Thus reason sets aside God's Word.

This great buttress of Popery.

Professes to oppose infidelity, really its sworn ally and counterpart.

Both, natural offspring of oldest form of temptation.

## II. STRENGTH OF THE TEMPTATION.

Here difficulty, from our incapacity to understand how evil could operate on sinless nature.

Primeval innocence ought, we think, to have served as panoply.

Or disposed to question Divine justice in leaving first parents exposed without warning.

But careful how arraign God.

Such questioning based on assumption that innocence and perfection synonymous.

Object of Creator to secure *intelligent* obedience.

Man created free, for in element of will lies essence of virtue.

First parents to issue from trial perfected or corrupted.

Creator left man to put finishing touch to his own creation.\*

If this correct, difficulties disappear.

Innocence no protection so long as will free.

But *strength* lay in Eve's *hesitation*.

To parley with tempter is to place self at his mercy.

Archimedes  $\pi\tilde{\omega}\tilde{\nu}\ \sigma\tilde{\tau}\tilde{\omega}$  is all Satan asks.

This Eve yielded, and temptation acquired strength.

Opened floodgate of sin.

Here see phases of infidelity.

Beginning of sin like that of strife.

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption, § 5.

**SECURITY AGAINST THE TEMPTATION.**

This found in confidence in truth of God's Word.  
 Had Eve this, not thrown off her guard.  
 Our safeguard in plenary inspiration and supreme authority  
 of Holy Scripture.  
 2 Tim. iii. 16. If cling to this, not shaken in truth.  
 Infidelity changes tactics, but safe if believe "Word of Lord  
 endureth for ever."  
 Excitement caused by "Essays and Reviews," and Bishop  
 Colenso spoke little for strength of Christian faith.  
 Now almost forgotten, but Bible where it was before.

"Our little systems have their day,  
 They have their day and cease to be,  
 They are but broken lights of Thee,  
 And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."\*

Same old objections which were answered before.  
 Illustrated in master's conduct.  
 Temptation in wilderness counterpart of that in garden.  
 "The sword of the Spirit" Christ's weapon.  
 Delight of His childhood, strength of manhood.  
 No novelty in Satan's attack, tries to make man doubt,  
 presume on, and reject God's Word.  
 The answer "it is written."  
 Here quarter to which go.  
 Ps. xvii. 4 ; Ps. cxix. 11 ; Col. iii. 16.  
 Never greater need than now.

**THE SOWER AND THE SEED.**

"The Sower soweth the Word." Mark iv. 14.

Not easy to unfold mysteries of kingdom of grace to carnal  
 minded men.  
 The king must lower Himself to level of His hearers.  
 Hence His use of parables.  
 This most important of all parables.  
 Narrated by three evangelists.  
 Mark iv. 13. Marks it as a fundamental parable.

**I. THE SOWER.**

Christ here designates Himself.

\* Tennyson.

Came to reveal profound spiritual truths.  
 His words felt to be a power in themselves.  
 Germs of thought, destined to expand, to suit all cases, and  
 to leaven whole tone of society.  
 Notice His industry in sowing.  
 "Went forth" not remaining in one place.  
 Delegated this office to ministers.  
 As Father sent Him, so sent us to sow, till Is. xxxv. 1.  
 Task assigned to us all important.  
 From pulpit we sow seed, words of life.  
 This seed-sowing a serious thing both for you and for us.  
 It becomes us therefore.

(1.) To sow good Seed:

The farmer careful on this point.  
 Enforced in parable of Tares and Wheat.  
 We on our guard, lest become instruments of "enemy" in  
 sowing tares.  
 The great danger of the present day.  
 Impatience of creeds and authoritative declarations of  
 doctrine.  
 Negative theology taught from too many pulpits.

(2.) To sow it as Seed.

Want to know what we are doing, and what we expect by  
 so doing.  
 The Christian ministry too often entered on merely because  
 it is a gentlemanly profession.  
 Such never succeed as sowers.  
 Farmer exercises judgment as to kind of seed suited, &c.  
 Our duty to consider mighty engine we wield. Is. lv. 11.  
 Consider subjects likely to profit.  
 Select topics suggested by Church services of the day.  
 Thus succeed in arousing prayerful attention.  
 May not realize all we expect, but yet, Ps. cxxvi. 6.  
*Text* a motto to encourage faithful pastors.  
 To see drunkards reclaimed, &c., this what we may expect.  
 Evidence in time past that the Word has free course.

## II. THE SEED.

Hopes of Husbandman disappointed often from defective  
 nature of seed.

But not so here. 1 Pet. i. 2, 3.

Importance of word as instrument for converting sinners.

Lost sight of when clergymen regard themselves as sacrificing priests.

Sacraments all important, but the *Word* God's great instrument.

To teach otherwise, would be to "corrupt Word." 2 Cor. ii. 17.

Not contradict *text*, literally "adulterating Word," as fraudulent tradesman.

That Word is Christ, unfolding self. John xv. 3, Ps. cxix. 11.

The incarnate Word. Ps. xxxiii. 6.

On earth exercised marvellous power. John vii. 46.

Now Spirit employs Word, so that "our hearts burn within us."

The Word, God's loving voice, conveying peace.

Invested with a life-giving principle, fills with joy. Cant. vi. 12.

With hope of this, we labour and address you, Gal. iv. 19.

Though we are weak, this immortal seed always the same.

Receive it. 1 Thess. ii. 13.

Think how solemn to sit under faithfully preached Gospel.

Think that God is appealing to you.

Think that Christ is seeking to convey Himself to your heart.

Think that angels are watching.

Ask Holy Spirit to apply Word.

Then a new world open out before you.

Through the new strange stillness round thee,

Through the palpitating air,

A new dawn will steal upon thee

How, thou canst not tell, nor where.

Pierced hands will touch and bless thee,

Words descend from highest heaven

Breathing through thy heart's recesses.

"O my child thou art forgiven."\*

## A SAD SIGHT.

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5.

Salvation despised from insensibility to guilt and power of sin.

Men confess its influence, yet indifferent.

\* The name of Jesus and other poems, by C. M. N.

Hardly give credit to. Article IX.  
 Take different view of human nature, "good heart."  
 Well to ponder on solemn statement here.

Moses sketching causes why deluge necessary.  
 Godly portion in minority.  
 Took stand as distinct body, iv. 26 (margin).  
 These "Sons of God," witnesses for Jehovah—salt.  
 But barrier broken down.  
 "Daughters of men," race of giants.  
 Continually repeated ; men choose wives

"Empty of all good wherewith consists  
 Woman's domestic honour, and chief praise ;  
 Bred only and completed to the taste  
 Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,  
 To dress, and trol the tongue, and roll the eye."\*

So daughters of Moab,—Delilah,—wives of Solomon.  
 Examples of results of 2 Cor. vi. 14.  
 Character of evil engendered described by *text*.

Expresses aggravated character of evil.  
 To say "God saw" a truism, for "all things naked."  
 But implies God alone could estimate it.  
 As "God saw it was good" implies no defect, so here no  
 excuse.

Truly sad sight, draw near.

# I. GOD SAW STREAMS OF INIQUITY.

No ordinary wickedness.  
 Not case of startling crime—not individual criminal—not  
 particular community.  
 Whole world a Pandemonium, a lazar house.  
 How hideous the contrast to "very good."  
 Sin degrades bowers of Eden.  
 Crime rampant, &c., earth a stage for defying God. *Text*.  
 Shocked to find human nature so base.  
 But still the same ; nay, "wax worse and worse."  
 Not merely light of history, but of Gospel before us.  
 Yet men view God as suits themselves, e.g., as all merciful.  
 God looks down now, and what does He behold ?  
 Wonder is that He restrains indignation.  
 Why ? Because of (1) salt, (2) His promise.  
 When promise made, saw hopeless to expect the lesson  
 would be profitable.

Nay, assigns same reason for opposite course, viii. 21.  
 Though apparatus of punishment more terrible, no reformation.

\* Milton.



Another mode must be adopted, to which deluge pointed.  
 As saved remnant out of ark, so baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.  
 By baptism of Spirit streams of iniquity arrested.

## II. GOD SAW FOUNTAINS OF CORRUPTION.

If fountain evil so streams. Root of bitterness.  
 Scripture multiplies expressions.

*"Saw heart evil"*

Prov. iv. 23. But how hopeless?

Heart like main-spring of watch.

A viper's brood hatched there, Matt. xv. 19.

*"Saw thoughts evil."*

Thoughts often undeveloped in acts.

Well for society that machinery to check development.

Well for the man himself.

But if checked others spring up equally vile.

Opinions formed dishonouring to God.

*"Saw imagination evil."*

Mind always forging material for thought.

Intrude unbidden—defy checks.

A universality—exclusiveness—constancy about the evil.

Is this picture overdrawn?

Who then deny doctrines of "original sin" or "preventing grace?"

Whole being radically vitiated.

Gold dim—melancholy ruin.

Description of text applies to every age.

But as in days of Noah, so now God waits to be gracious.

Christ more effective "preacher" than Noah.

We see remedy, Rom. v. 20, 21.

Yea, universality of evil source of hope, Gal. iii. 22.

Call for humiliation?

Call for gratitude?

Call for reverence and Godly fear?

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## THE COMMENCEMENT OF CHRIST'S CORONATION PROCESSION.

"And they came to Jericho; and as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side begging," &c.—Mark x. 46-52.

Discrepancies in three accounts.

Some assert two miracles, but plainly *one*, recorded by independent witnesses.

Silence of one witness ought not to invalidate testimony of another.

Mark, in specifying Bartimeus, does not contradict Matthew.\*  
No stumbling block to faith here, proofs of independent character of Evangelist's testimony.

Christ on way from Ephraim to Jerusalem.

His journey took form of a festal procession.

Full of interesting incidents.

Commencement inaugurated by this miracle.

Regard procession in three aspects ; and consider.

## I. WHAT IT SIGNIFIED.

It was Christ's ratification of His people's Messianic hopes.

Previously shunned publicity ; "hour not come."

Now case altered ; Prophet begins journey to holy city.

Appeal of Bartimeus.

Pleasant news for sinner, "Jesus passeth by."

Times when Jesus places Himself within reach.

Yet we slight such opportunities, say with Jacob,

Gen. xxviii. 16.

But if felt guilt, cry like Bartimeus.

Then wrestle, "I will not let thee go."

Then cry find sympathetic echo in God's ear.

But Bartimeus also manifested signal faith.

Uses Messianic title, not "Jesus of Nazareth."

"No man say Jesus is Lord but by Holy Ghost."

Matt. xxi. 22. O that we had this faith.

Beggar's cry proclaims the character of procession.

Jesus does not check it, but stops to answer it.

Draws attention to character now assumed.

Hint not lost on followers—see entry to Jerusalem.

## II. HOW THE CROWD REGARDED IT.

Various motives actuated followers.

Disciples alone knew real object of journey.

Others by curiosity, malignity, ambition, while many mere

Passover pilgrims.

All acknowledged Jesus as leader, enthusiasm excited.

Coronation procession of king.

\* See Lange on St. Matthew, vol. 1, p 263.

Elated at having recognized Messiah ; enforce His claims on polished citizens of Capitol.

Beggar's cry jarred ; "hold thy peace."

This view of Christ's progress repeats itself.

The Church follows in Master's train.

But mistake character of progress, pomp of royal progress.

Forget King calls for "broken hearts and contrite spirits."

Illust. Popery ; Ritualism.

Act on consciences, as crowd on Bartimeus.

Awakened sinner referred to miserable substitute for living Christ.

But these not the only hindrances.

Our own hearts ; worldly friends.

Temptations without combine with solicitations within to stifle cry.

"What various hindrances we meet,  
In coming to the mercy seat ;  
Yet, who that knows the worth of prayer,  
But wishes to be often there."

For there find "Son of David."

### III. HOW CHRIST HIMSELF TREATED IT.

As a journey of redemption for awakened sinners.

Thankful for difference between Christ's estimate of human misery and His servants,

Though journey important, and "straitened," yet stops.

Touch of nature in fickleness of crowd, v. 49.

Wants no friendly hand, for voice rings.

As beggar clutched garment, now as sinner throws it away.

Thanks, Bartimeus, for this lesson.

Hear Christ's voice in word.

Fling aside garments of self-righteousness.

"Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind ;  
Light, riches, healing of the mind ;  
Yea all I need in Thee to find,  
O Lamb of God I come."

V. 51. Why put question ?

How many suppliants would be confused by such a question ;  
no clear idea of want.

But not so here,

Come then and you will receive answer, v. 52.

Now procession sweeps onward.

Now see true significance, since outset thus signaled.

Spiritual sight needed for intelligent following of Jesus.

**THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE CONTRASTED.**

"For now we see through a glass darkly ; but then face to face ; now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as also I am known."—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Restlessness a characteristic of human nature.

Man's ideal of happiness never realized.

As a rule he lives constantly in the future, rather than in the present.

But to this it may be replied, Is there no such thing as contentment ?

Yes, but contentment does not exclude hope.

The believer is satisfied with the present, under an assured hope that the future will be more glorious. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Yet even he lives in the future—"he is saved by hope."

Contentment, then, forms no exception to the rule.

This restlessness manifested in desire for knowledge.

Arch enemy understood human nature when he said, Gen. iii. 5.

"Knowledge is power."

Bias of human nature seen in conduct of Corinthian Christians.

Overlooked humbler graces of Christian character.

The apostle here correcting this, and says 1 Cor. xii. 31.

Then follows the Psalm of love, vindicating its superiority.

*Text.*

Explain terms. Metallic mirror of ancients.

Knowledge conveyed in an enigma. Comp. Numb. xii. 8.

**I. OUR PRESENT CONDITION.** "Now we see through a glass darkly." "Now I know in part."

Everything here partakes of imperfection and change.

We talk of the perfection of art, but subject it to the microscope.

The child's inquiry baffles the wisdom of the sage.

Theories once universally accepted, now treated with contempt.

Knowledge and ignorance go hand in hand.

We feel this especially in seeking to acquaint ourselves with God.

He puts us, like Moses, in a cleft of the rock.

All nature speaks of a present Deity. Job xxvi. 14.  
 We can only discern the kingdom, not the king.  
 Yet men have always enjoyed some degree of light.  
 Even the heathen ; Rom. i. 20 ; Acts xvii. 27.  
 The Jew beheld Him in glass of type and ceremony.  
 But the Christian sees Him in the face of Jesus Christ.  
 Here we have a perfect medium, not distorting truth in the  
 process of its conveyance to us.

Yet even here, see Him "as in a glass darkly."  
 Men find fault with the Bible, its obscurity of style, its  
 brevity of communication, its supposed contradictions, &c.  
 Yet is this not a consequence of our own incapacity to  
 know but "in part?"  
 When God reveals Himself to man there must be "things  
 hard to be understood."  
 No want of simplicity in language with which plan of  
 salvation sketched.  
 No fact plainer than that Christ took human nature.  
 Yet who understands that fact?  
 God put on man, that man might become acquainted with  
 God, and yet at outset of inquiry confess *text*.  
 Also liable to distorted ideas of truth already revealed.  
 We read of God's "hand" and "arm," of His "ear" and  
 "eye," and men imagine a Being like themselves.  
 But you will never see God in finite form.  
 He reveals Himself to "the pure in heart" alone.

## II. OUR FUTURE CONDITION. "Then face to face." "Then shall I know even as also I am known."

Analogy and Scripture teach us it will resemble our present one.

As our present state is a social one, so the future.

As advantages here bestowed according to natural fixed law, so there.

As virtue here acquires superiority, so eminently there.

So *text*; imperfect knowledge here, perfect knowledge there.

But how reconcile this with v. 8, "knowledge shall vanish away."

By defining knowledge,—toil necessary to acquire it.

There it will not be knowledge but intuition.

No veil to check view, no medium needed to acquire ideas.

Deep mysteries of God clearly unfolded.

"Face to face." Not as angels who veil face, but 2 Cor. xiii. 18, Rev. xxii. 5.

The perfection of this knowledge illustrated by last clause.

"How am I known, and by whom?" Gal. iv. 9.

"All things naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

Ps. cxxxix. 16. "The Lord knoweth them that are His."

A knowledge not clouded by forgetfulness, nor obscured by distance.

If so, think of the flood of light which will burst upon us!

Then understand mysteries, e.g., of incarnation—Trinity—eternal generation of Christ—agency of Holy Spirit—death and resurrection.

Then reconcile difficulties, e.g., origin of evil, God's love with man's perishing, His sovereign election with freedom of human will.

Then ocean of truth fully explored.

Teaches us two lessons—

(1.) *Of caution and humility.*

Presumption to "rush in likefools where angels fear to tread."

Errors arise from incautious speculations.

Crude theories often framed bearing their own refutation on face.

(2.) *Necessity of love in both conditions.*

Love the atmosphere of heaven. "God is love."

Repose ourselves on His Word, not suffer difficulties to perplex us.

Bear with inconsistencies of Christian brethren.

This "the more excellent way."

#### THE CALL OF ABRAM.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. xii. 1—3.

The history of Israel passes through six stages. (See Kurtz Hist. of Old Covenant, vol. 1, p. 171.)

Here commencement of first stage.

First instance of kind of call God is ever making to His own people.

A startling command, unlike anything before heard.

But it was enforced by a glorious promise.

Grace and nature had now come into open conflict.

Divine promise evoked his faith, and command his obedience, so that He went forth. Heb. xi. 8.

## I. THE COMMAND. v. 1.

Interesting to note position of this incident in the sacred narrative.

Preceding chapter gives account of building of tower of Babel.

That attempt was the birth of heathenism ; asserting (1) that there is no God, (2) that man is his own Saviour.

The building of Babel is the commencement of a new development of humanity.\*

Therefore there must be a new development of grace to counteract it.

In the flood God had interposed in judgment, now in mercy.

In both cases He interposed to effect a separation.

In former God acted alone—now God and man combine to introduce a new era.

Idolatry had grown rampant already. Josh. xxiv. 2, 14.

In this condition, religious and political development would be retarded.

The tender germs of spiritual life would be choked.

Therefore the command is sharp, peremptory, decisive, *text*.

A precept needed to be reiterated in every age.

"Get thee out for thyself," that is for thine own good.

"He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

We are not to suppose Abram obeyed without a struggle.

His conscience acknowledged God's authority, but natural affection and influences of early education hampered him.

Mark, "God *had* said," not now when Abram obeyed.

Comp. Acts vii. 2, 4. Gen. xi. 31, 32.

Ties of nature hindered full response of Abram's soul.

He knew well the direction in which to journey.

But difficulties of emigration then great—his father aged.

\* Kurtz Hist. of Old Covenant, vol. 1, p. 205.

Made Haran his halting place, till his father's death.

How full of meaning all this is to us.

Influences of carnal nature hostile to the calling of God.  
Needs no ordinary faith to say to them, "Get thee behind me Satan."

Yet on this Christ insists, Luke xiv. 26.

Its difficulty appreciated by Paul, Eph. i. 18.

Induced to take lower ground, to stop at Haran.

Makes us content with stunted growth in grace.

But when led by Holy Spirit, we press forward to fellowship with Christ, in His rejection below and His acceptance above.\*

Further parallel between experience of Abram and that of believers.

In Abram's case death broke nature's links, so in ours.

Not mere temporal death—partakers of Christ's death.

The cross to us is, like Red Sea to Israel, separating from land of death and judgment.

Thus walk worthy of high vocation.

## II. THE PROMISE. Vs. 2, 3.

On this make only a few general observations.

An amplification of blessing of Gen. ix. 26, 27.

Here blessing on Canaan insisted on, more than curse on Canaan.

Promise to Japhet here also confirmed and enlarged.

This promise proved to be Divine, by resting on a physical impossibility.

Sarah's womb dead—the childless patriarch isolated from kindred.

Salvation to flow through a new race, endued with a peculiar character.

A character of self-denial, faith, and obedience, like its progenitors.

Sets forth omnipotence of God, Matt. iii. 9, Rom. iv. 16, 17.

Promise of Messiah most valuable part of *text*.

Not mentioned by name, for prophecy always in general terms.

Easy to see how Christ fulfils it.

He is a universal blessing.

He is a national blessing.

\* Notes on Genesis by C. H. M. p. 114.



He is a family blessing.

He is a personal blessing.

See that you are partakers of that blessing.

The true criterion, Gal. v. 24.

Then are you children of Abram.

# CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION.

"I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Ps. xxxii. 5.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ the great source of triumph and joy.

The Church therefore regards this as her crowning festival.

Hence Lent a season of preparation for it.

A season of special humiliation and self-examination.

Ash Wednesday its commencement; why so called.

Seven penitential Psalms appointed.

Here second of these. Consider

## I. DAVID'S HUMBLE CONFESSION. *Text.*

Costs him no ordinary struggle to speak thus.

Language implies resolution formed only after great debatings.

Natural to think well of ourselves.

Irritating to be told we are in the wrong.

Hence men shut their eyes to consequences of their conduct.

Act as sluggard who closes shutters to keep out morning rays.

Not willing to confess even to ourselves that we are wrong.

Such a condition prejudicial, nay, fatal to spiritual well-being.

Consciousness of being a self-deceived hypocrite makes a man morose.

His pride seeks for arguments to vindicate himself.

Thus oft the mourner's wayward heart

Tempts him to hide his grief and die,

Too feeble for confession's smart,

Too proud to bear a pitying eye.

Alas for him if this continues.

But God employs means to make His elect cry, Hos. vi. 1.

Illustrated here, its connection with Ps. li.

This Psalm penned later, after he had regained internal peace.

Throws light upon his state of mind before Nathan's visit.

We at a loss to understand how he could have continued so long unconscious of his guilt.

But must consider low moral tone of period, and David's position, that of an Oriental despot.

See here conscience evidently at work all the time.

In resisting its strivings, his health seriously affected, v. 3, 4.

Tortures of Spanish Inquisition not greater than those of an awakened conscience.

If silent as to guilt, not silent as to sorrow, but roars like a wounded wild beast.

This the howling of a dog, not the cry of a son, therefore rejected by God. Hosea vii. 14.

At last discipline effectual, like Prodigal he says, Luke xv. 18.

Discipline successful because sanctified by God.

Holy Spirit alone can bring conviction home to conscience.

Then sinner must speak out; a symptom of returning health.

We therefore want the Holy Spirit to enable us to confess.

Confession implies self-knowledge.

Before, no perception of full extent of evil. Job xlii. 5, 6.

Confession implies faith, else the repentance of Judas.

It must be hearty and sincere.

It will be particular and minute, recounting each sin.

It is the result of a holy self-examination.

It will be made directly to God, not to any so-called human priest.

The Romish confessional leads to impurity and degradation.

Let ours be David's cry, Ps. li. 4.

Then rise up pardoned and justified believers.

## II. HIS JOYOUS ABSOLUTION. "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

Discovered true remedy for disquietude.

Refreshing as He looks back on readiness with which pardon conveyed. Comp. 2 Sam. xii. 13.

Not tantalised with hopes and fears, not left in state of uncertainty.

This is what an awakened conscience wants, to obtain peace. Sin, a sore burden, but relieved at cross.

Bunyan shows this in the case of Christian, who could say—

“Blest cross ! blest sepulchre ! blest rather be  
The man that there was put to shame for me.”

For that man is our great High Priest, who alone can say :

“Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

Well may the believer now breathe freely.

Well may David say, vs. 1, 2.

This blessedness is open for each of us to obtain.

Lord give us each this blessed assurance.

Have you confessed your sin ?

Have you obtained absolution ?

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### THE SAINT ENGAGED IN MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

“I remember the days of old ; I meditate on all thy works ; I muse on the work of thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto thee ; my soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land.”—Ps. cxliii. 5, 6.

Here many sources of anxiety and distress.

Sickness, misfortune, slander.

Or convictions of sin, consciousness of fretfulness, withdrawals of tokens of God's favour.

Tempted at such times to say, “Who will show us any good?”

What is the remedy ? “Looking unto Jesus.” Well may we say, v. 6.

David in distress from both above causes.

This the last of the penitential Psalms, appointed for Ash Wednesday.

Buoyancy of his spirit had fairly given way.

How often thought follows thought, like Job's messengers.

Then how good when driven out of ourselves to God.

David knew where to obtain relief.

Now cultivate frame of mind to profit by Church services.

Season of Lent calls not for sad-coloured garments, but for meditation and prayer.

Consider David

### I. ENGAGED IN MEDITATION. v. 5.

Soul needs to withdraw from world, to muse on grace.

Carnal mind has subjects of meditation, but God says,  
Jer. iv. 14.

But believers like Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 63.  
 No lack of subjects to reflect on and profit by.  
 We see David:

(1.) **Looking backward.** "I remember the days of old."  
 This view peculiarly refreshing. Comp. Ps. lxxvii. 7, 8 and  
 10, 11.

Could not but calm agitation and dispel fears.  
 So when beset by foes, Ps. cxix. 52.  
 History of Israel full of records of Divine interpositions.  
 His own deliverances from lion and bear, from Goliath and Saul.  
 Who cannot recount instances of a similar character?  
 How often we reproach ourselves for false step in past life.  
 Yet rather recognize Father's hand in disposal of our lot.  
 Again, seen teachings of Father's love in deliverance from  
 difficulty.

Therefore take courage, though v. 4, for say with Apostle  
 2 Cor. i. 10.

(2.) **Looking around.** "I meditate on all Thy works."  
 Evidences of Divine wisdom and love in nature. Ps. xix. 1, 2.  
 God did not make the world an unsightly warehouse.  
 A world of brightness and beauty, of fragrance and music.  
 Its proofs of wisdom, &c., lead from nature up to nature's  
 God.

Happy who walks with Him ! whom what he finds  
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,  
 Or what he views of beautiful or grand  
 In nature, from the broad majestic oak,  
 To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God.

He who rules nature will provide for wants and still  
 anxieties of His people.

We can draw from inanimate witnesses of His love, lessons  
 of trust.

Refer to Mungo Park's experience when robbed by banditti  
 in Africa.\*

(3.) **Looking within.** "I muse on the work of Thy hands."  
 More marvellous work in his own soul, than any creation  
 exhibits.

As a sovereign he was exposed to many and great tempta-  
 tions.

His fall a theme of mockery to infidels.

\* Dictionary of Prose Illustrations. 5049.

Think you he was indifferent to these ?  
Grateful for mercy and grace which had pardoned his sin.

Ps. lxi. 16.

Let us also look within, to see if discern workings of grace.  
Not enough to trace God in nature, want witness of the  
Spirit.

“ Thou speakest in Thy works ;  
But wondrous though they be,  
They have no voice to utter forth  
‘ Jesus hath died for me.’

They show Thy goodness and Thy power divine,  
But O ! they cannot tell me Thou art mine.”

This is what we sinners want to know.  
What is our experience of the great work of Divine grace ?  
Pray for removal of objects of idolatry, like those Ezekiel  
saw in temple.

## II. ENGAGED IN PRAYER. Verse 5.

Close connection between meditation and prayer.

Ps. xxxix. 3, is followed by a prayer.

Here posture of earnest entreaty, “ I stretch forth, &c.

Posture of fear, in consciousness of guilt.

Posture of eagerness, stretched as if already in grasp.

Posture of love, extended to clasp neck.

Yea, posture of triumph, appealing to no dumb idol.

Good when we can enter into spirit of Psalmist.

Last clause still more expressive of intense earnest-  
ness of purpose.

Dry, parched, felt need of refreshing tokens of God's grace.

As dry earth cracks, as if inviting showers, so thirsted for  
God.

Cold-blooded professors, what know ye of thirst of Jewish  
saint ?

Does it not sound to you like morbid fanaticism ?

Why, because yours is another kind of thirst.

Striving of God's Spirit suppressed in you by sinful ten-  
dencies.

Seek for spiritual insight to probe workings of deceitful  
hearts.

Folly to cherish creature confidence.

Ours to aim at growth in grace, to pray with *tear*.

Draw near and condescend,  
 To take up thine abode  
 Within this sinful heart and dwell  
 An ever present God.  
 Lord, fill me with thy fulness ; give me grace  
 To commune with Jehovah face to face.

Do with me what thou wilt,  
 Low at Thy feet I fall ;  
 Absorb me in Thyself ; be Thou,  
 Father, my all in all.  
 Show me the glorious beauty that is thine  
 And the deep lowliness that should be mine.\*

### THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."—Matt. iv. 1.

Church now directs attention to Christ's sufferings, beginning  
 with His fast of forty days.  
 He could not enter on work in flippant spirit.  
 Must sit down and count cost.  
 A truly great soul will not under-estimate dangers.  
 A season of retirement necessary to review.  
 Take general view of the temptation.

### I. THE TIME.

"Then," after events of preceding chapter.  
 For thirty years in obscurity.  
 Impulse swaying nation—crowds at Jordan.  
 One undistinguished, even by John, only John i. 33.  
 Now sign given, chap. iii. 16, 17.  
 "Then" from Jordan of glorification to wilderness of  
 temptation.  
 Marks important epoch in career.  
 Looks backwards and forwards.  
 Repeated in Christian experience.  
 Beset by temptations, yet proportionate to Christian attain-  
 ments.  
 After communion with God, set upon by Satan.  
*E.g.* Peter (Matt. xvi. 23), Paul (2 Cor. xii. 7).

\* The Name of Jesus and other poems, by C. M. N.

Yet see how God equips servants for duties.

"As thy day so strength,"—Isaiah lix. 19.

Divine and human in Christ's person, a mystery.

From Luke ii. 52, we gather consciousness only *gradually* dawned.

But v. 49 points out reverse—knew God as His Father.

Still if doubts existed in His mind, dispelled now.

So we shall triumph in realizing reality of Sonship.

Then walk with God; roll off assaults of Satan.

## II. THE SCENE.

Mount Quarantania. Desert between Jordan and Jerusalem.

In caves around hermits used to fast.

As Mahommedan Ramadan—Hindoo Fakirs.

So-called Lenten Fast, observed often in a superstitious spirit.

Mere abstinence, a "neglecting of body" (Col. ii. 23) opposed to genius of Christianity—feeds spiritual pride.

But scene shows why Christ fasted, and what lesson for us.

At outset referred to object of retirement.

Holy One in contact with sinners must retire.

Mark i. 35. Matt. xiv. 23.

If necessary then, how much more at outset of ministry.

Needed to be alone with God, to spread revelation before Him.\*

His fast a "cheerful feast" for celebration of disclosure of inner life.

How earnestly meditate,—weigh difficulties,—consider course to be adopted.

Any wonder He should have fasted?

Authenticated instances of long fasting. (See Lange.)

At subsequent period, John iv. 32—34.

And now, like Moses on Sinai alone with God, abstinence compensated for by "power of Spirit," Luke iv. 14.

But another reason why wilderness selected.

Not only to strengthen soul, but to meet Satan.

Solitude has advantages and disadvantages.

Hermits not out of reach of spiritual enemies.

People solitude with foul spirits.

But no self-engendered enticements for sinless One.

\* Lange's Life of Christ, vol. ii. 47.

Sought wilderness to meet foe on his own ground.  
 A fit representation of world blasted by Satan.  
 Yea, deep significance in Christ's Ministry dating from wilderness.\*  
 First Adam in garden, but expelled.  
 Second Adam takes up conflict at point where he was defeated, and as inheritor of defeat.  
 "Hungered" as if to contrast with Adam's eating.  
 Foiled tempter, proclaiming nature's deliverance from curse.  
 Mark i. 13 confirms this.  
 Same truth illustrated in His miracles.  
 Yea, still further trace it in Gospel, Isaiah xxxv. 1.  
 But one other lesson.  
 Christ's fasting a withdrawal from world.  
 World's idea of Redeemer false.  
 Prophecy's glorious ideal distorted by false theology of Synagogue, by hierarchical tendencies of age, and by general vanity of a childish generation.  
 From this Christ withdrew, as afterwards, *e. g.* John vii. 3, 4. John vi. 15, Matt. xvi. 23.  
 So our duty to sit loose from world.  
 Self-indulgence its characteristic.  
 Our need of fasting to keep under body.  
 But our fast also, a moderation in use of God's gifts.  
 "Eating and drinking" characteristic of last days, but Luke xxi. 34.  
 Our true fasting an abstinence from sin.

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#### THE SEASON OF GRACE.

"For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."—1 Cor. vi. 2.

Evanescence character of present scene of existence.  
 Events ever teaching us uncertainty of life.  
 Paul alive to necessity of embracing Christ without delay.  
 Sought to induce others to share his own experience.  
 What attractiveness is there not in the Gospel? ch. v. 21.  
 Foundation of Church laid—work of grace going forward.  
 Yet thousands blind to what is going on in God's economy of grace.

\* Archbishop Trench's *Hulsean Lectures*, p. 237.



Paul could not view their apathy with indifference, therefore cries, v. 1.

Refers back to promise to Messiah, Is. xlix. 8.

A promise made to Him in answer to His prayer. Ps. ii. 8.

Show connection of this with apostle's exhortation in *text*.

This is the season of grace—consider its bearing

## I. UPON OUR DUTY HERE.

- (1.) It demands an intelligent appreciation of the opportunity afforded us.

We ought to look at our position fairly in the face.

God makes offers for our good.

But they must be accepted *now*, without procrastination.

Heb. iii. 7—9. An instance of ruinous consequences of self-deceit.

Why should we be guilty of similar perversity?

To do so would be to proclaim our condemnation.

Is. vi. 9. was spoken to an infatuated people.

When this frowardness yielded to, it acquires increased power over victims so that, 2 Thess. ii. 11.

Take heed lest this be so with you, but hasten now, *text*.

- (2.) It calls for earnestness and diligence.

God does not deal with us as helpless puppets.

Statements like Rom. ix. 21 refer to obstinate rebels as Pharaoh.

God appeals to reason, affection, &c., of His own people.

Appeal in v. 1 may be applied to individual believers.

The weight of our influence ought to be thrown to aid the Holy Spirit in His work of grace.

This must be done not negligently. Ecc. ix. 10.

Hence Phil. ii. 12, 13.

As fellow-labourers with God, victory is in our power.

Urge to earnestness from consideration of limited period of season of grace.

- (3.) It calls for patience and perseverance.

God has His own set time for world to run its course.

There is at times much to discourage us.

Power of evil in our own souls often seems to increase.

Then a feeling of despondency arises, as 1 Kings xix. 4.

Yet why yield to this when we know *text* true?  
 We soon grow weary in well-doing—but Heb. xii. 4, 5.  
 Comp. Jer xii. 1 and 5.  
 There may be worse trials in store, but 1 Cor. x. 13.  
 “In the swelling of Jordan” Christ at His servant’s side.

## II. UPON OUR HOPE HEREAFTER.

It testifies to the nature of that hope.  
 He who is indifferent to spiritual things cannot hope to go  
 to heaven.  
 Matt. vi. 21.  
 Now, time to examine title deeds of inheritance.  
 Our thoughts should ever be travelling upwards.  
 Happy they who thus act.  
 With Christ for our companion, this indeed “an acceptable  
 time.”  
 Trifle not with this precious season.  
 As the banished Israelite’s eye and heart turned to  
 Jerusalem, so must it be with us.  
 “Whom have I in heaven but Thee,” the language of  
 our hearts.  
 Address unconverted.

## THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

“And Abraham said, My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a  
 burnt offering.—Gen. xxii. 8.

Never was man more severely tried than Abraham.  
 First called to give up country and kindred.  
 Contrast the modern emigrant seeking his fortune in some  
 distant colony.  
 Then it was a sore trial to give up Ishmael.  
 With a sad heart he obeyed the command. Gal. iv. 30.  
 But now the climax of all.  
 God however knew the character of the Patriarch.  
 Only second to the faith of Abraham is that of Isaac.  
 He must have known that he was to be the victim.  
 His question in v. 7 one of awakened suspicion.  
 Must have gone like a knife to his father’s heart, yet he  
 calmly replies, *text*.  
 We will consider Abraham’s reply ;

**I. AS THE LANGUAGE OF OBEDIENCE.**

Abraham's previous discipline prepared him for obedience.  
God had put him to school.

Abraham naturally desired that Isaac should enter into the spirit by which he was animated.

With what unutterable feelings must they have regarded each other as they ascended mountain.

The command he had received was peculiarly revolting.

There is a sacredness about human life.

Could any circumstance justify such a command?

Must it not have been a suggestion from the pit of hell?

Custom of offering human sacrifices familiar to Abraham.

On heights around might have seen the smoke and heard the din.

Was he who had been summoned to be the living protest against heathenism, to imitate its most revolting act?

But there was another consideration.

Isaac was the son of promise. Heb. xi. 17, 18.

But principle of obedience too deeply implanted in his heart.

Confident in God's Almighty power, he goes to the fatal spot.

Happy he who can thus cheerfully acquiesce in God's will.

Abraham has no misgivings, knows God's voice too well, and spite of anguish he could not repress, says *text*.

A noble specimen of the obedience God requires.

Comp. Gal. i. 15, 16.

Carnal mind ever suggests difficulties as excuses for non-compliance with God's will.

Why? Because not experimentally acquainted with God.

Faith is able to give up all visible things, saying Ps. xlv. 1, 2.

Carnal mind looks at circumstances, ponders results, &c.

Instead of Ps. cxix. 60 it says "I cannot give up this Isaac."

A proof of alienation of heart—not as Abraham.

In two former trials element of promise sustained him.

"Go forth from thy country."—Gen. xii. 2.

"Banish Ishmael."—Gen. xxi. 13.

But now God says I make thee no promise, v. 2.

Only one whose heart wholly given to God could respond.

The sacrifice God demanded, He has Himself yielded in Christ.

Seek the Spirit of Christ to say Heb. x. 7. (*ult.*)

## II. AS THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH.

Faith based on knowledge of end sought, and confirmed by past experience.

His acquaintance with God ripened into sincere friendship.

His faith saw light where all else had been darkness.

It had united patriarch's soul to the perfection of Jehovah.

He ceased to perplex himself, and says to Isaac, *text.*

But His faith also took a wider range.

The Church sees here a type of Christ's sacrifice.

Isaac's willingness foretels Christ, John x. 17, 18.

Isaac bearing wood—Christ bearing His cross, &c.

In Christ's case no voice cried "Stay thine hand."

Drank the cup to its very dregs.

John viii. 56 so that in spirit of prophecy he says *text.*

Abraham's faith a powerful living principle.

O for a faith like his, that we

The bright example may pursue ;

May gladly give up all to Thee

To whom our more than all is due.

We want faith to smile at storms though the Master may  
apparently be asleep.

Without this, world will obtain victory over you.

Ask for faith to be able to say—

Is there a thing than life more dear ?

A thing from which we cannot part ?

We can ; we now rejoice to tear

The idol from our bleeding heart.

Jesus, accept our sacrifice ;

All things for Thee we count but loss,

Lo ! at Thy word our Isaac dies,

Dies on the altar of Thy cross.\*

## THE SYROPHŒNICIAN WOMAN.

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts," &c.  
—Matt. xv. 21—28.

Jesus ever enduring the contradiction of sinners.

Here in defending His disciples, irritates His enemies. v. 12.

Seeks refuge among "the dogs without."

\* Charles Wesley,

So also Elijah at Sarepta, and Paul, Acts xiii. 46. (*ult.*)  
 Christ ever thus driven forth by worldly-mindedness of His  
 people: (1) in His infancy; (2) after His baptism; (3)  
 before His final sufferings, John xi. 54.

Need to be on our guard lest we provoke Him to withdraw.  
 Fear threat, Rev. ii. 5—"Ichabod."

Jesus seeks seclusion, yet Mark vii. 24. Consider

## I. THE PETITIONER.

She has everything against her—a foreigner—a Canaanite.  
 She was not ignorant of this—at no loss to account for His  
 chilling reception.

Yet proves herself wise and ingenious to transform His re-  
 fusals into cogent arguments for herself.

Her faith obtains a more glorious victory than that of  
 Jacob.\*

O blessed discipline of the cross!

Under it, indeed, apt to give way to despondency.

Let this woman's example encourage us.

## II. HER PETITION. v. 22.

She is careful to give Jesus due honour.

Knew well Messianic hopes of Israel.

Strange language from such lips, and at such a period!

David had driven her ancestors from Jebus—His family  
 now fallen low in Israel.

## III. HER DISCOURAGING RECEPTION. v. 23.

Strange that the fountain of mercy should be sealed!

Even His disciples manifested more pity. v. 23.

It may be they were touched by distress of this poor  
 heathen.

Fanaticism cannot be cherished, when cry of human misery  
 heard and felt.

Yet there was something selfish in their request.

Theirs the heartless granting of a request, like that of the  
 unjust judge.

Still, they could not understand their Master's conduct.

The key to that conduct is given in v. 24.

\* Stier, Words of the Lord Jesus, vol. ii. p. 310.

Here we have Christ's vindication of Himself.  
 Keeps in view His office, "the sent One," who has a prescribed commission.  
 Luke iv. 43, "cities" in the Holy Land, to which His labours confined.  
 True in Him "all families" were to be blessed. John x. 16.  
 Circle of His vision not gradually widened as success beckoned Him on.  
 From first He had a clear view of the object of His mission.  
 Yet now, rejected by Israel, might not question arise, "Shall I not offer myself at once to Gentiles?"  
 For in Him there must have been the debatings of human consciousness.  
 Pauses to consider whether He will accept this Canaanite.  
 His disciples' entreaty reminds Him He is Israel's shepherd.  
 Rom. xvi. 8.  
 Only by a rebound from them is grace to light on the Gentiles.  
 But woman's faith proves her one of lost sheep of true spiritual Israel.\*

#### IV. THE CHANGE IN HER MODE OF APPEAL. v. 25.

Yet His answer, v. 21, sufficient to destroy her hopes.  
 Finds Him a proud Jew, jealous of encroachment of Gentiles.  
 Yet discovers encouragement in use of word *κυναριος*.  
 Idea of "impurity" discarded, that of "dependence" or "domesticity" substituted.  
 She sees it to be a lesson of patience and humility.  
 "Let the children *first* be fed, then it is your turn."  
 A lesson for us, who have nothing to boast of.  
 She meekly acquiesces, and says v. 27.  
 Pleads she is now brought within circle of blessings of great Householder.  
 At His table all are satisfied in their place and order.  
 "I am a dog," yet plead with confidence for this crumb.  
 As believers we shall be ready to acquiesce in condemning language of Scripture.  
*E.g.*, Isaiah i. 5, 6. "Truth, Lord," it is so with me!  
 Yet faith can draw comforting conclusions from dismal premises.  
 In this "Truth Lord, yet" is involved whole order of salvation.

\* Archbishop Trench, Notes on Miracles.

*E.g.*, David, Ps. lxxiii. 22. "Truth Lord, yet," vs. 23, 24.  
*E.g.*, Paul, Eph. iii. 8, 1 Cor. xv. 9. "Truth Lord, yet,"  
 1 Cor. xv. 10.

So when convictions of sin crowd on soul "yet" lays hold on  
 Christ's grace.

Holy Spirit will infuse genuine confidence in midst of our  
 deep humility.

## V. HER TRIUMPHANT SUCCESS. v. 28.

Like Joseph, He will not long show aspect of severity.

"Great is thy faith"—not seen a miracle—not heard prophets—  
 not trained in law—treated with contempt by  
 Me.\*

Let us press on undaunted by obstacles.

God often makes Himself strange to His people.

Yet at last we shall hear Him say, "Be it as thou wilt."

## SANCTIFICATION.

"For this is the will of God, even your Sanctification." 1 Thessa. ii. 3.

How he ought to walk and please God, is the Christian's  
 inquiry.

God's word his rule and guide.

His obedience to it should be constant, consistent, conscientious.

Evil nature makes external temptations doubly dangerous.

Ignorance of spirituality of law makes men indifferent to sin.

Primitive Christians only newly reclaimed from vices of  
 heathenism.

Apostle therefore charges them to walk consistently.

Here reminds them of God's design. *Text.*

## I. THE NATURE OF HOLINESS.

A conformity to will of God.

A result of radical spiritual change.

Fruit of union with Christ. 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Evinced by daily conduct, in obeying charge "be ye holy."

Involves several important elements;

\* Chrysostom quoted by Lange *in loco*.

**(1). Separation from the world.**

Not the separation of Romish devotees. John xvii. 15.

The setting up of material barriers is the essence of Pharisaism.

Rather in avoiding polluting influences, books, places of amusement, &c.

Spite of ridicule believer seeks thus to obey charge. 2 Cor. vi. 17.

**(2). Consecration of self to God.**

Ever conscious of having been "bought with a price."

A member of a holy priesthood.

Loves to tread courts. Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

**(3). Mortification of the flesh.**

Partaker of death of Christ. 1 Pet. iv. 2.

Carnal desires, the weeds in the garden of the soul.

Degrade men to level of the brutes.

But also man of refined tastes, infected.

The heart must be purified from evil thoughts.

**(4). Subjugation of whole man to law of God.**

Man by nature as a wild ass's colt.

But when enlightened by Holy Spirit say "not my will but Thine be done."

Resignation to God's will a source of satisfaction, and gain, 1 Pet. v. 6.

**II. THE PRIVILEGE OF HOLINESS.**

Confine to three points :

**(1). It evinces the certainty of our election.**

That God has purposes of mercy towards His chosen ones, evident from whole of Scripture.

To objections of cavillers the reply is, Matt. xi. 26, Rom. ix. 20.

The true question, am I thus chosen? How can I ascertain? By yielding to Spirit's influence, in other words by effectual calling.

The link in chain, between God's foreknowledge and man's salvation.

"Let the righteous be glad," why? 1 Pet. i. 2.

If no sanctification, no sonship.



(2). It illustrates the character of our service.

This depends on character of the Master served.

The livery of the Queen worn by noblemen.

Ours a priestly service. Rom. xii. 1.

As priests draw near to God; offer up incense, care of Sanctuary.

Ours an attractive service. Eph. v. 8.

There is a mistaken zeal for God, John xvi. 2, but if sanctified, we prove we are members of royal priesthood.

(3). It realizes our likeness to God.

How few Christians aim at this!

And yet they have a perfect model to imitate.

Be it ours to aim, though world laugh. 2 Sam. vi. 21, 22.

### III. THE MEANS BY WHICH IT IS TO BE SECURED.

(1). The blood of Christ, the efficient means.

Guilt there washed away. Is. i. 18.

"I cannot pray but I sin; nay, I cannot hear or preach a sermon, but I sin; I cannot give an alms or receive the Sacrament, but I sin; nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are still aggravations of them; my repentance needs to be repented of; my tears want washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again with the blood of my Redeemer."\*

Our souls infected with leprosy, ever cropping out.

(2). The Word, the instrumental means. John xvii. 17.

Seed of new birth—food of new life.

By appropriating to ourselves its promises, we become part-takers of divine nature. 2 Pet. i. 4.

Yet powerless of itself without the Holy Spirit.

Thus blood of Christ, Word of truth, and Spirit of holiness all combined.

This is the will of God, is it your will also? Eph. v. 17.

Throw no obstacle in Holy Spirit's way.

Fix eyes on Captain of salvation.

Then knowledge will increase love, and love will perfect holiness.

\* Bishop Beveridge.

## JACOB WRESTLING.

"And Jacob was left alone ; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh ; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Gen. xxxii. 24—27.

Pride manifested in self-reliance.

True, want of self-reliance is a culpable failing.

But self-reliance carried to excess, equally faulty.

Yet when driven to confess failure, then God's opportunity.

Good to be humbled, in order to cry to God out of depths.

Milton's saying true ;

Who aspires must down as low  
As high he soared ; obnoxious first or last  
To basest things."

Prosperous not to be envied ; afflicted learn to be comforted.

When storm cloud darkens sky, covenant rainbow shines.

When helpless, write "Peniel," and rejoice that angels  
record name "Israel."

Trying position of Jacob.

Encouragement of v. 1, succeeded by tidings of v. 6.

Good reason for fear—Esau's vow of revenge.

Yet home sickness impels Jacob to brave brother's wrath.

Worst fears realized,—utters prayer.

But now exhibits self-reliance—makes disposition.

Now all is done,—feels issue out of his own hands.

Then occurred incident of *text*.

## I. THE PATRIARCH'S POSITION.

One of isolation and loneliness.

Twenty years before similarly placed. Ch. xxviii. 11.

But then youth elated at blessing secured.

Then beheld vision of ladder.

But night now not so dark as his own anxieties.

His trial hour—when man shuns observation.

Hour when self-reliant man confesses weakness.

Hour of temptation as Jesus in wilderness—as Elijah "it  
is enough, &c."

Alone ! when conscience heard.

Jacob's reflections on deceit to his father and want of faith.

So we must be alone.

Good to commune with our own heart.

As business men necessary to seek occasions of retirement.

If task irksome, unfavourable testimony to spiritual condition.

Criminal, and pleasure-seekers dread solitude, why,

"Retire into closet and shut door."

Thus say with Christ "I am not alone."

Though furniture mean, yet write on its walls "Peniel."

## II. HIS OCCUPATION.—vs. 24, 25.

Not a camp-follower or one of Esau's attendants.

Patriarch knew his adversary and hence earnestness.

Not a mythical story.

A real struggle with a real, personal being.

Need not inquire who, whether v. 1, or Exod. xxiii. 20, or Joshua v. 14.

In angelic visitants discern second Person of Trinity.

Here see nature of believer's occupation.

Our life a warfare.

But Jacob wrestled not with foe, but friend shy and reserved.

When grasped by adversary, Jacob's fears vanished.

Not wrestling of Olympic games, but of Hosea xii. 4.

Wrestling of earnest entreaty.

Must wrestle with sin, but wrestle by prayer.

Our strength of no avail, enlist resources of omnipotence.

Not a hopeless task.

Jacob's thigh out of joint, yet overcomes.

So penitent gains fresh strength in prayer.

Job xxiii. 6. Here the comfort.

## III. HIS RESOLUTION.—v. 26.

Cry of vanquished foe? No, last expedient to try faith.

As Ruth held Naomi.

Margin, "ascending of morning," time for prayer at end.

Jacob knew value of blessing. Prov. x. 22.

Let us thus lay hold of Christ.

He graciously puts Himself in our way, happy then if say Cant. iii. 4.

Let not sloth, or false humility cause us to loose grasp.

Not content with power with God, but "*prevail*."

Must be pleaded with "I will yet for this be enquired."  
 Ask for Holy Spirit, for gifts of grace, for faith, love, hope.  
 Then place of prayer, a Peniel.  
 Then angels hover over us as "heirs of salvation."  
 Then "ascending of morning" of peace and joy.

### TRUE BLESSEDNESS.

"And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it. Luke xi. 27, 28.

John vii. 46. A remarkable testimony to the power of Christ's words.

So this woman, entering into a mother's feelings of pride in a distinguished Son.

Her's a very different spirit from that of v. 15.

Jesus gives to each its just and becoming answer.

#### I. THE WOMAN'S EXCLAMATION. v. 27.

Easy to gather thoughts passing through her mind.

The over-hasty, untenable theory of a carnal mind.

Envies Mary's good fortune in bearing such a son.

Contrast this ideal with the reality. Mark iii. 20, 21.

Fond illusion of human hopes destroyed by experience.

Her's a type of superficial religious sentiment.

##### (1.) It is easily excited.\*

Its subjects usually impulsive persons.

A powerful sermon, for instance, will excite them.

##### (2.) It is quickly manifested.

##### (3.) It soon disappears.

Their goodness like the morning cloud.

Such too frequently the case with so-called revival services.

But gather from Christ's reply, the value He sets upon it.

##### (1.) He does not wholly disapprove of it.

"Yea, rather," an admission of certain amount of truth.

He does not condemn even shallow emotions.

\* *Lange in loco.*

Dangerous to assert that all outward manifestations of religious feeling are superficial. Comp. Acts ii. 37.

(2.) His "rather" implies a deficiency in such manifestations.

Where there is a real work of grace, there will be *growth*.

(3.) He desires it should be exchanged for something better. v. 28.

Desires to see Himself, the Word, formed in the soul.

This we must aim at—not content with passing emotions.

We must endure.

The process slow of years,  
The discipline of life.  
Of outward woes and secret tears ;  
Sickness and strife ;  
The idols taken from us one by one.  
Till we can learn to live with Christ alone."

But consider more at length,

## II. OUR LORD'S REPLY. v. 28.

This woman's exclamation contains the germ of Mariolatry. Popery has grafted on Christianity the abominations of Paganism.

The adoration of the Virgin Mary is only the old Pagan worship of Venus, &c.

Christ's reply full of prophetic discernment.

He does not question the honour attributed to His Mother.

Luke i. 28.

But after all not hers alone, for Heb. ii. 14, and Isaiah ix. 6.

"The handmaid of the Lord " would have been shocked at honour done her by Church of Rome.

No hint in the Gospel of her having been unduly elated.

Besides, individuals are selected by God for His purposes, yet not objects of His love.

Men may, like Balaam, declare faithfully God's will.

Mary's true blessedness, that of Luke i. 45. (Margin.)

It was her faith which constituted her blessed.

In her see an example of the blessedness of v. 28.

Contrast this with the carnal conception in v. 27.

(1.) It is of a higher character.

Ambiguous answers given at Apollo's oracle at Delphi.

Precisely thus does man's deceitful heart serve him.

But God's word deals faithfully. Acts xiv. 22.

It reveals a blessedness to which no sorrow is added.  
 It points to the regions of eternal glory.  
 The power of human imagination wonderful.  
 But God's word goes beyond. 1 Cor. ii. 9.  
 Blessed indeed are they who hear it. Jer. xv. 16.

(2.) **It has a firmer foundation.**

Human happiness uncertain, dependent on mutable contingencies.

"Man never is but always to be blessed."

But the capacity for hearing God's word an unfailing source of enjoyment.

If, like Mary, you "ponder" on it, a light will arise.

It will become a living principle, exhibiting its influence in your life.

Christ will be formed in you, His word fulfilled. Ch. viii. 21.

(3.) **It is of a more enduring character.**

Rev. xxii. 14. That the consummation.

Not hearers only.

Share in blessedness of angelic hosts. Ps. ciii. 20.

Seek this blessedness.

There is an admiration of Christ's character that is consistent with infidelity.

Don't be content with the blessedness of the bond of external ordinances.

## THE STRONG MAN AND HIS CONQUEROR.

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, He taketh from him all the armour wherein he trusted, and divideth His spoils."—Luke xi. 21, 22.

The design of Christ's coming. 1 John iii. 8.

His expelling devils an indication of His being the "promised seed."

Such a miracle now performed in presence of Scribes and Pharisees.

But spirit of infidelity rife among them, as in later times.

Modern criticism denies reality of Christ's miracles.

Modern science denies possibility of miracles, as being interferences with immutable laws of nature.

But the Scribes asserted that they were the works of hell.

Christ shows the fallacy of this in three arguments.

(1.) The folly of supposing that Satan aims at his own overthrow.

The kingdom of evil at unity with itself when opposed to good.

Satan casting out Satan would cease to be Satan.

(2.) An *argumentum ad hominem*. v. 19.

(3.) Built on former two, that He wrought miracles "by the finger of God.

Carries back thoughts to Moses. Exod. viii. 19.

Proves Himself to be the prophet "like unto Moses."

Illustrates by *text*—a sort of parable.

## I. THE STRONG MAN.

We attribute vast strength to angelic beings. Ps. ciii. 20.

Pre-eminently so with their princes or leaders.

Such is Satan over the ranks of hell.

His titles indicate this, "lion," "Abaddon," "dragon," &c.

Now glance at

(1.) **His palace.**\*—the world, 1 John v. 19.

Agency of "prince of this world" manifest in it.

A usurper, actuated by no feelings of affection for his subjects.

(2.) **His goods**—men and women, 2 Tim. ii. 26.

He uses them as his instruments.

"The armour" without which he would be a poor, naked devil.

He must have tools with which to work.

Where John xiv. 30, his dominion at an end.

But alas he has no difficulty in finding tools.

He never wants an Achan, a Hadad, an Elymas, a Judas.

You see him in pride of intellect—of independence—of unbelief.

You see him even in the Church, Luke xxii. 31, 2 Tim. iv. 10.

Yea, you see him in failing of some dear Christian friend.

But why travel without? Let us look within our own heart.

\* Lange in loco.

(3.) **His false peace.**

Matt. x. 34, because false peace must be disturbed.

At ease in Zion—blinded by God of this world.

He hides from the secret of his own bitter experience,  
Job i. 7.

His goods like him in this respect, for Is. lvii. 20, 21.

Yea, they have a peace of prosperity—of carnal security—  
of determined obstinacy—of death.

How sedulously he watches over his victims, as Cant. iii. 5.

Yes, a fatal peace. Eccl. xi. 9.

**II. HIS CONQUEROR.**

Jesus strong in His own nature—in the might of God—in  
the power of the Holy Ghost.

Yet well ask, Is. xlix. 24, 25. A passage Christ has in view.

Come down as *ισχυρότερός*. Luke iii. 16. Comp. Is. liii. 12.

Now consider,

(1.) **His resolute attack.**

Satan knew object of His coming, hence Matt. ii. 3, 16, 21.

His first public act after His baptism. Matt. iv. 1.

His life henceforth engaged in attacking Satan. Luke x. 17.

(2.) **His complete victory.**

Victory ever sat on banner of Captain of our Salvation.

Followed Satan into the grave, the very citadel of his power.

His victory is still proceeding.

Will be consummated in Rev. xx. 2 and 14.

(3.) **His glorious spoils.** “He taketh from him,” &c.

Instances in Zaccheus, Mary Magdalene, disciples, &c.

But more especially in His death. Col. ii. 15.

Also in His resurrection and ascension. Ps. lxviii. 18.

Faculties of sinners wrested from Satan and sanctified.

Like demoniac of Gadara, “sit at feet of Jesus.”

Strange if you know not of such instances.

Once, children of wrath, but now polished weapons fit for  
Master's use.

Is it so with us?



## JOSEPH IN PRISON.

"And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison."—Gen. xxxix. 20, 21.

Reasons why Joseph's biography is so minutely recorded.  
 God has recourse to bye-paths for accomplishing His purposes.  
 He had first to create a people from Abram's sterile body.  
 He contemplated a union of nature and grace.  
 But He had to work upon the corrupt material of fallen nature.

Its evil tendencies display themselves at the outset.  
 Waywardness of Jacob's sons made Him set them temporarily aside.

Joseph selected as His instrument.  
 God's blessing not on Shechem or Hebron, but on Egypt.\*  
 There everything threatens Joseph's life, but God shields him.

Here we see him in lowest condition of his fortunes.  
 The youthful prisoner must be regarded.

## I. AS A SEEMING SINNER. v. 20.

Conscious guilt is ever enraged at purity and virtue.  
 Joseph experienced this first from his own brethren.  
 Hope again dawns upon him in Potiphar's house.  
 But here he is assailed by his master's wife.  
 A painful story—shows what a vindictive woman capable of.  
 Modesty is the crown of womanhood.  
 Rob her of it, and she becomes a degraded creature.  
 How important for mothers to instil sentiments of purity in their daughters' minds.  
 Reformatories cannot restore lost virtue.  
 She becomes Satan's slave, at whom

"Sobriety did stare; Forethought grew pale,  
 And Modesty hung down the head and blushed;  
 And Pity wept, as on the frothy surge  
 Of fashion tossed, she passed them by, like sail  
 Before some devilish blast, and got no time  
 To think, and never thought, till on the rock  
 She dashed, of ruin, anguish and despair."†

\* Baumgarten's Apostolic History, vol. i. 249.

† R. Pollok in Dict. of Poetical Illustrations, 1285.

Her character betrayed itself to Joseph, who fled.  
 Example to young men to shun haunts of vice, and guard  
 avenues of soul.

Accuses him to Potiphar, who was "angry"—perhaps at  
 having to lose services of a valuable slave.

Perhaps known profligacy of Egyptian ladies made him  
 discredit her story.

But his family honour is concerned,—sends slave to  
 prison.

Here Joseph was worse off than in the pit at Dothan, for  
 now his reputation is tarnished.

At first he was subjected to severe treatment. Ps. cv. 18.

Would picture to himself busy tongues slandering him.

Joseph a type of Christ.

Like Joseph He was sold to strangers.

Cross and grave were to Him what the dungeon was to  
 Joseph.

He was left alone with our sins—treated as a sinner.

Accused of gluttony, blasphemy and high treason.

He was treated as a transgressor even by God. 2 Cor. v. 21.

The whole subject is full of mystery.

Like Joseph he went down to the depths of human misery.

The cross speaks to us of God's hatred of sin.

## II. AS A MAN OF TESTED INTEGRITY. v. 21.

Joseph persecuted both by his own brethren and strangers.  
 Designed to prove that God was sufficient for him.

Ch. xlix. 24.

God's merciful purposes were bound up with him. Ch. xlv. 5.  
 Jewish proverb says, "If the world did but know the worth  
 of good men, it would hedge them about with pearls."

But God knows them and watches over, and vindicates His  
 own. v. 22, 23.

Moral force of his character wins for him authority.

Exercises spiritual power—interprets dreams.

Again typifies Christ.

In middle ages Jews were persecuted as His crucifiers.

But we Gentiles equally guilty. Acts iv. 27.

Divine truth a test to whole world—stirring up its enmity.

Man treated Jesus as a malefactor, while God withdrew  
 from Him.

Yet He was still the well-beloved of His Father.\*

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption. Section 46.

He endured God's wrath, but not torments of damned.  
On the cross He was infinitely precious in the Father's sight.

God vindicated His righteousness.

Need not refer to Pilate's justification of Him.

Testimony of penitent thief. Luke xxiii. 39—42.

Testimony of Roman centurion.

We have a deep personal interest in His sufferings.  
Want to enter more into the fellowship of those sufferings.  
In clinging to cross become dissociated from sin. Rom. vi. 14.  
His grace will support us as it did Joseph. Rom. viii. 17.

### THE COMPLAINT OF WEAK FAITH.

"All these things are against me."—Gen. xlii. 36. (ult.)

Such was the complaint of Jacob.

Hardly to be wondered at if you consider all the circumstances.

It was ever Jacob's misfortune to be wounded in the tenderest and most sensitive part of his nature.

The blear-eyed Leah forced upon him instead of Rachel.

His love for the latter would naturally excite the jealousy of the former.

The death of Rachel made him concentrate his affection on her two sons.

This excited the jealousy of his other sons, to which Joseph fell a victim.

Years passed, and he clung convulsively to Benjamin.

Now he was required to be given up, as well as Simeon, whom he already regarded as lost.

Was it any wonder he should say *text*.

### I. THE COMPLAINT OF WEAK FAITH.

Sentiments people cherish are to a great extent created by the circumstances of their lives.

In prosperity those sentiments of a joyous character.

Yet need to remember "days of darkness" which may be at hand.

Trouble a part of the constitution and course of nature.

Storms a part of an economy of mercy.

Some are apt to question the beneficence of such providential arrangements.

But the storm gives new life to wasting herbage, &c. &c.

We look at events from our own contracted stand-point.

Trouble at times seem peculiarly severe.

Sufferer sees nothing but darkness, Ps. xlii. 7.

His faith, never strong, cannot withstand such assaults, therefore cries *text*.

We aggravate misfortune often, by the gloomy view we insist upon taking of our circumstances.

Had Jacob's faith been like Abraham's, he would hardly have given way thus.

As a matter of fact all things were not against him.

So we take counsel of our own faithless fears and forebodings.

"O purblind race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true;  
Here thro' the feeble twilight of this world  
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach  
That other where we see as we are seen."\*

We can also discern reasons for afflictions.

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness," yet for this there is a cure.

## II. ITS CURE.

To be found in the advice of Eliphaz, Job.xxii. 21.

Attention to this would spare us much needless worry.

It would be to acquire a child-like confidence in His Fatherly character.

It would be to acquire confidence in Him as Ruler.

But it would more especially teach us two things.

### (1). That He is the giver of His Son.

Who that considers this can doubt the love of the Giver?

This disordered earth has been trod by the son of man, and therefore is destined to be regenerated.

What do we see in this Son of Man?

A thorn-crowned King who might well say, Lament. i. 12.

Is not this calculated to still your peevishness under far lighter trials?

\* Tennyson

Does it not impel you to imitate His sublime acquiescence  
in His Father's will. Comp. Ps. xxii. 1—3.  
God has no Son without suffering, therefore Jesus bowed  
His meek head.  
From this He rose triumphant.  
Our suffering with Him an assurance of our triumph with  
Him. Rev. vii. 14.

(2). That He is the giver of all things with Him.

This the Apostle's argument. Rom. viii. 32.

True, yet my faithless heart cries, "Why then am I left  
desolate?"

Because though Christ is given, you have not accepted  
Him.

If you were taught by Holy Spirit, you would be enriched  
above all your soul can desire.

Then instead of saying *text*, your language would be  
Rom. viii. 28.

Only cling to Father's hand, and you will find good come  
out of evil.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace :  
Behind a frowning Providence  
He hides a smiling face."

Trials intended to elevate you, &c.

May be addressing some who need not say *text*.

Worldly good without God's blessing turns to gall and  
wormwood.

Cultivate indwelling of Christ in heart.

Identify yourself with Him, then prepared for any issue.

## THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

"For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem  
which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which  
is above is free, which is the mother of us all."—Gal. iv. 25, 26.

Old Testament history a rich storehouse of spiritual  
instruction.

Peculiarity of Paul's method of dealing with its incidents.

He contrasts the first Adam with the second.

Points to Israel in the wilderness eating manna, &c., as types.

Here selects incident in Abram's career, to convince Galatians.

Points to Sarah's demand. v. 30.

This a prophetic oracular utterance, applying to Galatians.

The whole subject full of difficulty.

We ask is this incident a literal fact, or a mere mythical narrative?

How far are we justified in following Paul's example, like Origen and the fathers of the Alexandrian school?

Such a system of interpreting Scripture is mischievous.

Observe here, Paul simply says it may be used as an illustration to enforce truth he is now urging.

His subject the contrast between Law and Gospel, or between Jewish Synagogue and Christian Church.

# **I. THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE, v. 25. Give literal rendering.**

The great question to be decided was, is Christianity simply an expansion of Judaism? \*

A very powerful party of Judaizers in primitive church.

To these Paul says, you are the children of Hagar.

Yet Apostle does not disparage Old Testament dispensation.

His contrast not between Old Testament and New, but between blinded Jews and enlightened Christians.

The Judaizers wrested law from its true position.

They forgot it never could become a parent capable of producing a spiritual offspring. †

Forgot Old Testament church had two covenants, one of law and one of grace.

Blessing of Abraham sprang from promise of grace, while the law was a kind of afterthought.

Incapacity to perceive its true design, proclaimed them to be of the stock of Hagar.

Impatience of Sarah put Hagar out of her true position.

So perverted conception of the law puts it out of its legitimate place.

Those who cling to it for justification exhibit spirit of slaves.

Illustrated in Scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's day.

Apostle's argument applies as forcibly to present day.

\* Conybeare and Howson's *Life of St. Paul*, vol. I. p. 522.

† Fairbairn's *Typology of Scripture*, vol. II. book III. chap. ii. sect. iv.

A feverish restlessness in condition of so-called religious world.

Air darkened with missiles of religious controversy.

Increasing love for the mere externals of religion.

This the distinguishing feature of Church of Rome.

This imitated in Church of England while Scriptures set aside.

Hence theatrical parade in Divine worship, foreign to John iv. 24.

Nothing will compensate for want of this spiritual worship.

Experience proves that gorgeous symbolism is a hindrance to true spiritual worship.

Decorations of churches at harvest festivals, &c., sad to a spiritual mind.

Surely ours should be the homage of the heart.

These material offerings weaken spiritual perception, and dwarf faith.

Such makeshifts form "weak and beggarly elements" of v. 9.

Cling to these and you will only be the spurious offspring of the bond slave. Rev. ii. 9.

## **II. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. v. 26.**

Paul well knew what the Jerusalem of his day was.

What a contrast to Ps. xlviii. 12, 13, lxxxvii. 3.

Evidently Psalmist caught sight of a nobler polity.

The blessed company of all faithful people. Phil. iii. 20.

They are a spiritual community.

They are subjects of mysterious process of regeneration.

This analogous to what gave Abraham a child of promise.

Isaac not born till capacities of nature were exhausted.

So believers. John i. 13, 1 Pet. i. 3.

Consequently they are alive to a sense of their privileges. Complete in Christ, they need not resort to unworthy artifices.

Why should they ask for man's absolution?

Why should they confess sins to a sinner like themselves?

They want no vestments, &c. in their religious worship.

Hence believers think little of questions of church order, &c.

They know that ceremonies are needful, but according to 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

When they violate that rule, they wither spiritual life and destroy membership with Catholic Church of Christ.

For the Christian Church is bound by no prescribed forms.  
No, she is "free" in the highest sense of the word.

Strive to attain to true standing in grace.

Only by union with Christ are you sons of the freewoman, John  
viii. 36.

Religion is not attending to external forms, but in surrender  
of heart.

Office of Holy Spirit to make you, v. 31.

### JOSEPH EXALTED.

"And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred were made known unto Pharaoh."—Acts vii. 13.

The Bible is at unity with itself.

The New Testament is foreshadowed in the book of Genesis.

We see the fall in Adam, redemption in Abel, communion  
with God in Enoch, regeneration in Noah, election in  
Abram, Sonship in Isaac, discipline of the Son in Jacob,  
and, lastly, heirship in Joseph.\*

Jacob's love for Joseph. Determines he shall be his heir.  
Publishes his intention by "the coat of many colours."

Joseph's very dreams are of glory.

But it excites envy, v. 9.

In Egypt he experiences conditions of heirship. Rom. viii. 17.

Martyr-sufferings mark heir's path to glory. Heb. ii. 10.

Thus Joseph in prison a type of Christ rejected. Matt. xxi. 38.

Now consider him invested with glory and

### I. MAKING HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.

A pointed reference in text to "second time."

Joseph recognized them at first, but spoke roughly.

But his roughness veils a loving and merciful purpose.

Christ has ascended on behalf of His brethren.

But they cannot share His triumph till hearts changed.

"Times of restitution" await Israel's repentance.

Millennial blessedness waits removal of veil. 2 Cor. iii. 16.

Till then a maimed body, wanting fulness. Rom. xi. 12.

Important then, for Israel to be converted. Zech. xii. 10.

See this refigured in Joseph's conduct.

\* Joseph. By J. C. Bellett. (G. Morrish.)



Famine touched Jacob's sons—like prodigal in want. Hos.  
v. 15.

Instincts of revenge, pride, and love struggling in Joseph.  
But restrains them in order to serve his brethren.

As Christ afterwards, John xiii. 3, 4, so Joseph now.

How is it to be effected?

(1.) **Their conscience must be dealt faithfully with.**

Puts them in prison—demands Benjamin—retains Simeon.

All this awakens reflection. Genesis xlii. 21.

Joseph gladly sees their conscience recovering itself.

Sends them home sadder and wiser men.

(2.) **Their hearts must be renewed.**

They return the second time with Benjamin.

Disconcerted at Joseph's altered demeanour at his inquiries,  
his emotion, and the feast to which he invites them.

There he discerns no sign of envy at Benjamin's mess.

But now severer test—cup in Benjamin's sack.

Will they contentedly journey homeward, leaving Benjamin  
as they had once left Joseph?

No, they resolve to share their condemned brother's fate.

Their spokesman, Judah, manifests their altered mind.

Though neither spies nor rogues, conscience had found them  
out. Genesis xliv. 16.

Pleads for Benjamin. Joseph's end gained. Makes himself  
known.

The regeneration of Israel still waits to be effected.

Jesus now preparing them for it. Acts v. 31.

Then the prophecy shall be fulfilled. Rom. xi. 26. 27.

But how is it with you? Has Jesus made Himself  
known to you.

Have your hearts gone forth in deep abasement to bow  
before Him?

Have you awakened to perception of bliss of brotherhood?

“Jesus, the hope of souls forlorn,  
How good to them for sin that mourn,  
To them that seek Thee, O, how kind;  
But what art Thou to them that find?

No tongue of mortal can express,  
No letters write its blessedness.  
Alone, who hath Thee in his heart,  
Knows, love of Jesus, what thou art.”

**II. INTRODUCING HIS KINDRED TO PHARAOH.**

This follows beautifully as result of grace given to them.  
Joseph had secured for Pharaoh absolute sovereignty.  
Egyptians his slaves, yet contented, for it was Joseph's arrangement.

The autocrat has the Redeemer associated with him on the throne.

That Redeemer is not ashamed of his brethren, though shepherds.

Pharaoh welcomes them because they are Joseph's brethren.  
Then follows investiture in Goshen. Gen. xlv. 20.

Sets forth blessings in store for believers.

Egypt under Joseph a sample of what earth will be.

Ephesians i. an inspired commentary on this episode of Jewish history.

There see true Joseph gathering into one—giving Spirit, v. 14.  
Earth like Egypt "the purchased possession."

By the Spirit believers made children of the resurrection.

Till His resurrection Christ never called them brethren.

John xx. 17.

"Not ashamed to call them brethren," for given them the Spirit.

Outpouring of Holy Spirit experienced now.  
Jesus is making Himself known to His brethren.

**THE REVELATION AT THE BURNING BUSH.**

"Moreover He said I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Exod. iii. 6.

Spoken at a momentous crisis.

Forty years before Moses tried to rouse his countrymen.

In the desert mused over their wrongs.

At the burning bush meets God.

These words as true now as when originally spoken.

**I. A REVELATION OF THE NAME AND CHARACTER OF GOD.**

(1). **His Name.**—God, Elohim, Creator, &c.

Past and future linked here, for new name Jehovah.\*

(2). **His Character.**—"The God of thy father."

Of Amram who had consigned his infant to ark.

\* Kurtz on the old covenant. Vol. II. 201.

Moses now feels how much he was indebted to God.  
 But in Acts vii. 32, "fathers." Of all thy ancestors.  
 Peculiarity of God's relationship to Israel.  
 Other nations descended from Abraham, not sharers with  
 Israel.  
 Arabians from Ishmael, but "in Isaac seed called."  
 Edomites from Esau, but channel of grace through Jacob.  
 The God of the Jews, yet not of all of them.  
 True children of Abraham distinguished by his faith.  
*Text* then displays God's character, same to children as to  
 fathers.  
 Though Acts iii. 25., yet remember God said, Exod. xxxiv.  
 6, 7.  
 He has said "the soul that sinneth it shall die."  
 Therefore Jews no right to arrogate blessings of Abraham  
 when disobedient, than to use false proverb, Ezek. xviii. 2.  
 We stand in same covenant relation.  
 Need to acquire right estimate of God's character.  
 Christian privileges will not of themselves secure our salvation.  
 We must be "followers of those who through faith and  
 patience inherit the promises.  
 Promise sure to seed, but take care you are the seed of  
 promise.  
 Give yourself to Christ, that you may gain good will of Him  
 that dwelt in the bush and there said *text*.

## II. THE PURPOSES THIS REVELATION WAS INTENDED TO SERVE.

(1). To instruct Moses in expectation of a resurrection from the dead.

So Christ taught. Matt. xxii. 31, 32.

"God not God of dead." yet Sadducees could not perceive  
 this, nor materialists in the present day.

The patriarchs dead as men count death.

If then they had no personal existence, *text* would be  
 bitterest irony on part of God against Himself.

But declares He is *now* to them all that God is, and can be.  
 Immortality therefore enjoyed by patriarchs, for God's gifts  
 are eternal, as David confessed. 1 Chron. xvii. 27.

But more, that patriarchs shall enjoy existence in all the  
 completeness of human nature.

Soul of Abraham alive, but that is not entire Abraham.

Therefore we infer the dead shall be raised.

(2). To give assurance of fulfilment of God's promise.

To that promise Israel still clung.

So afterwards, Acts xxvi. 6, 7. Comp. Acts. xxii. 15.

See how idea of resurrection interwoven with Jewish religious anticipations.

"Old Fathers did not look for transitory promises." Art. VII.

Heb. xi. 13. Palestine a type of heaven.

If no such country God would disown those whom He had deceived, but Heb. xi. 16.

But what had this to do with immediate purpose of sending Moses to deliver Israel?

That deliverance a pledge and assurance of resurrection.

The promise. Gen. xiii. 14, 15.

Israel's existence as a nation identified with dwelling in Canaan.

People and land united, as soul and body in man, so that deliverance from Egypt equivalent to a resurrection.

This view confirmed by Ezekiel's vision of dry bones.

Set time had come to fulfil covenant engagements. Chap. ii. 24.

If thus true to fathers, so now to children. Ps. xliv. 1.

Interest in Christ's resurrection.

Claim fulfilment of God's promise.

## THE TRANSFIGURATION.

"And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening. And behold there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."—Luke ix. 29—31.

This a most important incident in Christ's life on earth.

Recorded by the three synoptists—referred to in John i. 14.

It stands midway between His baptism and crucifixion.

Fiercely assailed by rationalists.

In addressing a Christian congregation consider it as setting forth.

### I. THE DIGNITY OF THE LORD'S PERSON.\*

Throughout the Gospels we are impressed with Christ's dignity.

\* Lange *in loco*.

This evidenced in His discourses—in His miracles.  
 He consequently was the subject of criticisms, as John vii. 12.  
 Even His disciples had occasionally their misgivings.  
 Before His final sufferings they needed crowning evidence.  
 Therefore the three disciples favoured.

Full evidence on this point, however, reserved for His ascension.

While on earth He must always have been misunderstood.  
 Might acknowledge Him "fairer than children of men," but not admit His deity.

This incident not convincing to world, therefore Matt. xvii. 9.  
 But Peter finds his previous convictions strengthened by it.  
 Nearer to heaven he could not have been than here.  
 Form in which essential deity of old manifested was that of dazzling light.

The Shechinah on the mercy seat—no longer displayed.  
 Realized in Christ, though invisible to unbelieving Jews.  
 Here clearly seen, "the bright cloud," "the glistening raiment," bearing witness to 1 John i. 2.

## II. THE PURPOSE OF HIS SUFFERINGS.

Moses and Elijah were representative men.  
 The law and the prophets two standing institutions in Israel, which our Lord would not set aside. Matt. v. 17.  
 Now holds council with them.  
 Two saints whose bodies had escaped taint of death.  
 About 400 years before, brought together significantly. Mal. iv. 4, 5.  
 Here to inaugurate new covenant, speak of method of its ratification, v. 31.  
 "The sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," the theme of both.  
 Even disciples failed to understand a suffering Messiah. Mark ix. 10.  
 Understood it only after His resurrection. Luke xxiv. 44—46.

We may gather drift of their conversation.  
 Contrast John xvi. 12 with these visitors from the spirit world.  
 They could see significance of His path of suffering.  
 Saw Him as representative of guilty humanity.  
 Declare purpose of His sufferings to disciples as "witnesses."

Evidently understood by them. Compare 2 Pet. i. 16.  
 Observe "decease" equivalent to Exodus.  
 Delight of author of book of Exodus in conversing with  
 the great Antitype.

### III. THE EMINENCE OF HIS KINGDOM.

Must allude to degradation of His sufferings.  
 Three disciples soon to experience scandal of cross.  
 Hard to understand how kingdom of grace to be established  
 through suffering and death.  
 This event designed to teach them this. Matt. xvi. 28,  
 Mark ix. 1.  
 Ordinarily and correctly referred to destruction of Jeru-  
 salem.  
 But also to be interpreted by transfiguration. Comp. 2 Pet.  
 i. 16—18.  
 Eminence of His kingdom here illustrated.  
 An everlasting dominion over visible and invisible creation.  
 Moses and Elijah courtiers in attendance—precursors of Rev.  
 vii. 14.  
 Disciples seeing them must confess "the Son of Man is  
 glorified."  
 Saw kingdom of God virtually established, world outside  
 implicitly vanquished.  
 Are you subjects of that kingdom?  
 Has Christ entered your heart as incarnate word?  
 Has He by His Spirit restored you to true filial position?  
 His glory to be shared in by His redeemed people.  
 As He was transfigured, so we must be "transformed."

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### PILATE'S INQUIRY.

"Pilate said unto Him, 'What is truth.'"—John xviii. 38.

Had this question been seriously asked, it would have well  
 become one in Pilate's position.  
 As Roman Governor it was his duty to try Jesus.  
 Everything pleads in the prisoner's favour.  
 Had he been just and conscientious he must have released  
 him.  
 But no, he was a cold-blooded, political intriguer.

At first treats the whole matter contemptuously. v. 31.  
But compelled to seriousness when he hears He is Cæsar's rival.

Asks, v. 33, and receives the reply, v. 36, 37.

Regarding Him as a weak-minded enthusiast, He says, *text*.

Various suggestions offered for Pilate's inquiry.

Let us regard it,

# I. AS A HEATHENISH QUESTION.

Fallen man shrouded in error.

Truth beckons him on, yet eludes his pursuit.

This the ancient heathen felt, as sought to find out God.

The education of the world had been going on for centuries.

The master minds of Greece and Rome prosecuted inquiries after truth.

Yet truth far from their grasp. Illust. Cicero.

Over the portals of the future world, a veil drawn.

Their enquiry was, who can solve the problem of our existence? *Text*.

Contrast Jews, their inferiors in intellect.

To them God had spoken clearly and unmistakably,

True, much they could not understand, but Deut. xxxix. 29.

The contrast is set forth in Ps. iv. 6.

Clearer light now, yet the inquiry of *text* still made.

Modern science disputes John xvii. 17 (ult.).

Bible set aside, as a book suited for a darker age.

Its truths lost practical influence.

Some admit there is an element of truth in it, which each man must elicit for himself.

Systems rise and fall—no certainty anywhere.

"The silent stars are overhead,  
The silent graves below,  
A dream between—how quickly fled  
Is all we know." \*

This the proud discovery of modern Rationalism.

It has overthrown authority of Scriptures, but substituted nothing trustworthy in its stead.

Hence this an eminently childish age.

This heathenish question constantly asked.

\* Rev. W. W. Hew, in *Lays of the Sanctuary*.

**II. A FLIPPANT QUESTION.**

Lord Bacon's view of Pilate's motive in speaking thus.  
But it has been urged, Pilate was in no mood for "jesting."  
Yet it was evident he neither expected, nor desired an answer.

Familiar with contradictory systems of philosophy of his day.  
Here, a noble opportunity for deciding the question.

Our Lord's calmness, a proof He was sustained by conviction of the truth.

Had just spoken like he had previously done to Pharisees.  
Ch. viii. 14.

To be repelled from Christ, implies want of congeniality with truth.

Points to this here, in order to awaken Pilate. v. 37 (ult).  
Pregnant words! Truth only successfully sought by souls in harmony with it.

The truth-seekers must be truth-lovers. Rev. iii. 18.

To these Christ reveals Himself. Ps. xxv. 9; cxlv. 18;  
Matt. v. 6,

No response from Pilate. *Text.*

How many act precisely similarly.

So—Herod, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa.

So still, how many church-goers depart unchanged.

These well represented by Ezek. xxxiii. 32.

No sincerity in their desire to know the truth. 2 Tim. iii. 7.

Do not study Bible prayerfully, nor seek aid of Holy Spirit.

Often degenerate into conceited shallow reasoners.

The horizon of their hopes limited to present world.

1 Cor. xv. 32 (ult.).

Beware of this flippant spirit. Come to Jesus. Cant. ii. 14.

**III. AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.**

The first two modes of inquiry wrong—a third remains.

To this mode of inquiry an answer readily furnished.

(1.) Truth is contained in the Scriptures. Eph. i. 13.

(2.) It is revealed by the Spirit. John xvi. 13.

(3.) It is concentrated in Christ. John xiv. 6.

He is the incarnation and embodiment of the truth.

The substance of all the shadows of it in law, &c.

He has removed the veil from the future.

In Christ incarnate, crucified, &c., truth realized in its most sublime aspects.



A king in whose kingdom truth is the manifested power.

Believe this and you will have answer to *text*.

Then you will find it a truth which liberates. John viii. 31, 32.

A truth which sanctifies. John xvii. 17.

A truth which saves. Ps. cxvi. 7. 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

Take care the truth is not ashamed of you.

Ask king to give you the hearing ear and willing mind.  
3 John 3, 4.

### THE MASTER'S CONFESSION.

"And the high priest answered and said unto Him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto Him, Thou hast said : nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."—Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.

This question a most momentous one.

During His whole career, Jesus had been watched by spies and enemies.

Now, at the supreme hour there ought to have been no want of witnesses.

True, some could prove He had broken the Sabbath.

Some could prove He had called the rulers hypocrites, &c.

Some could prove He had despised the traditions of the elders.\*

At last two came forward, saying v. 61.

Mark, only two, and they could not agree.

An awkward dilemma—prosecution in danger of breaking down.

Caiaphas evidently felt this, for v. 62.

But "Jesus held His peace"—innocence making Him "as a deaf man that heard not."

Hence course taken by Caiaphas in first part of *text*.

Question put by the high priest in his official capacity.

No true Israelite could be silent under such an appeal.

Comp. Levit. v. 1 and Prov. xxix. 24.

Success of such an appeal illustrated by 1 Kings xxii. 16 and 27.

Just so here—the time to be silent is past. *Text*.

\* Stier, Words of the Lord Jesus, vol. vii. p. 323.

**I. A DECLARATION OF CHRIST'S PERSON.**

Controversy between Christ and Jews hinged on Caiaphas' question.

The coming of the Messiah, an essential part of Jewish creed.

Much vagueness in their expectations from conflicting intimations of prophecy.

Generally looked for as "the Son of David." Matt. xxii. 42.

An earthly potentate who would fulfil Ps. lxxii. 8—11.

A deliverer from the galling yoke of Rome.

This made the Jews the easy dupes of impostors, and led to the destruction of Jerusalem.

But higher sentiments current amongst them.

*E.g.*, John vii. 27, based on Rabbinical tradition.

A proof that He would be more than an ordinary man.  
Comp. John xii. 34.

But Caiaphas with fuller understanding of the law, couples Ps. ii. 6, 7, and Ps. cx. 1, 4, in *text*. Comp. Mark xiv. 61.

Question put in tone of undisguised contempt.

To this Christ replies, "I am." Mark xiv. 62.

Contrast this outspoken confession with His former reticence. Matt. iv. 3—7; John vi. 15; Matt. xvi. 20.

But now throws off all reserve, for momentous consequences hang on His answer.

The question of Caiaphas resolves itself into, "Can a sinner be saved?" "Art thou the Saviour?"

Our Lord sees His Church and the world hanging on His answer.

Yes, He is our Immanuel. 1 John v. 20 (ult.)

**II. A PREDICTION OF HIS GLORY. v. 64.**

A twofold reference, (1) to the immediate, and (2) the remote future.

This corollary to His "I am," thrills His accusers with awe. Note change, from "Son of God" in v. 63, to "Son of Man" in v. 64.

For carry back thoughts to Dan. vii. 13, 14.

A prophecy held in high esteem by earlier Rabbis, but evaded by modern Jews.

It testifies to the humanity of the Messiah.

This idea familiar from Is. xi. 1 and liii. 7.

But Daniel sees His superhuman exaltation as "God over all."

Hence Christ always spoke of Himself by this title.

But never used by disciples, for His manhood only a stumbling-block till Rom. i. 4.

Only a few days to intervene till that event.

(1.) **Jesus foretells His Mediatorial Sovereignty.**

They were soon to see that David's Son is David's Lord.

He was soon to be crowned King. Ps. xlv. 7.

A testimony to Caiaphas of the coming overthrow of brute force.

In vain should they try to crush followers of Lamb. Acts vii. 56.

"The rod of His power" manifest, in conversion of sinners.

As a king He directs and animates His servants. John xiv. 12.

Thus seated till 1 Cor. xv. 24.

(2.) **He predicts His second advent.**

To this event the Church looks forward.

To this the whole of prophecy points. Rev. i. 7.

But how was it true, as regards Caiaphas and his satellites?

They saw Him, in marvels attending His crucifixion, in events of day of Pentecost, and in destruction of Jerusalem.

All history a development of Christ's power.

History and the Second Advent mutually illustrate and confirm each other.

For Caiaphas that event an awful one, but how for you?

## THE RENT VEIL.

"And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."—Mark xv. 38.

Calvary, not a scene of unmingled humiliation.

True, every kind of indignity heaped upon the sufferer.

Yet the triumphs of Jesus began on the cross.

His very death-cry betokened truth of John x. 17, 18.

It was this extorted Centurion's confession, v. 39.

Sun darkened, rocks rent, &c. *Text.*

This veil before the Holy of Holies. 2 Chron. iii. 14.  
Entered by the High Priest on the day of Atonement.  
In this he typified Christ.

Entered *alone*, but as if to assure us He had indeed passed  
into the Holiest, *text*.

But consider some of its lessons. It teaches us:

## I. THAT THE LAW OF JEWISH ORDINANCES IS FOR EVER ANNULLED.

The Mosaic dispensation evidently of a transitory character.

A finger post pointing to a better dispensation.

Rom. x. 4. Its *substance*, its *object*, its *termination*.

The moral law can only be obeyed through faith in Him.

The ceremonial law abolished by Him. Col. ii. 14.

Yet not before all was fulfilled, for John xix. 28 and 30.

That cry on Calvary echoed on Moriah, for *text*.

Observe this occurred at the ninth hour.

The priests in the holy place must have seen it.

With what feelings of astonishment must they have gazed?

Yet the rent veil revealed no glorious spectacle.

The second temple not equal to the first.

Yet where was the fulfilment of the promise? Haggai, ii. 9.

They knew, sufferer on Calvary claimed to be their Messiah.

Yet their voices were uplifted for His death.

The rent veil spoke to them very humbling lessons, which  
their pride would lead them to conceal.

How then did the Evangelist know it? Comp. Acts vi. 7.

In embracing Christ, their faith confirmed by *text*.

## II. THAT SALVATION IS NO LONGER CONFINED TO JEWISH PEOPLE.

Mosaic law eminently exclusive.

Gentiles shut out from God's covenant love.

Could only at best become "proselytes of the gate."

But *text*—God no longer any "respector of persons."

The sacrifice of Jesus was for the benefit of all. Eph. ii. 14—17.

Japhet now dwells in the tents of Shem.

Now no distinctions of rank or birth. Col. iii. 11.

Also bespeaks the abolition of "times of ignorance."

Isaiah xxv. 7 now beginning to be fulfilled.

The sacrifice on Calvary rent veil of ignorance. Is. lx. 3.  
 To heathen asking Micah vi. 6, Jesus says, "I am the way."  
 To Greek philosophers asking John xviii. 38, He says, "I  
 am the truth."  
 To self-righteous asking Luke xviii. 18, He says, "I am the  
 life."

If party distinctions abolished shall we say, Is. lxxv. 5.  
 If He has made both one, shall we put them asunder?  
 If ceremonial law cancelled, shall we insist on Shibboleth.  
 O let us keep unity of spirit, in the bond of peace.  
 Remember too, now, no excuse for ignorance.  
 Let us not act as Jews. 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15.  
 If so, in vain expect another miracle, for only once, *text*.

### III. THAT HEAVEN IS NOW OPENED FOR ALL BELIEVERS.

Sin had blocked up the avenue to it.  
 The law of Moses could not remove obstruction.  
 Inquiry unanswered "how shall a man be just with God?"  
 The veil hung before the mercy seat.  
 But Jesus has rent it asunder. 2 Cor. v. 19.  
 Has entered Heaven as High Priest to make intercession.  
 Heb. x. 19, 20. Dilate on "new," "living," "consecrated."  
 We need no human priest, for we are "a royal priesthood."  
 Our hope sure, anchored within the veil.

Apply the subject.  
 Grasp your privileges—realize their preciousness.  
 Let no unworthy doubts keep you back.  
 Remember the veil still up for sinners. Ps. lxxvi. 18.  
 Seek aid of Holy Spirit.

### DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE EGYPTIANS AND ISRAEL.

"That ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between  
 the Egyptians and Israel."—Exod. xi. 7.

The arrangements of Providence accord with the dispensa-  
 tions of grace.  
 Distinctions in grace continually manifested.  
 This distinction furnishes rule for arrangements of Providence.  
 True, not always apparent, but ultimately truth of *text*  
 seen.

Exhibited in God's dealings with His people.  
First separated by His grace, then treated in His providence  
as a separated people.

Seen in Cain and Abel; Isaac and Ishmael; Jacob and  
Esau.

Here, see operation of same law on grand scale.  
Israel in Goshen exempted from the Plagues of Egypt.  
Final plague announced. Exod. iv. 22, 23.

This catastrophe to illustrate distinction, vs. 4-7.

The same distinction still observed ;

## **I. IN THE COMMUNICATIONS OF GRACE.**

Distinctions of various kinds observable.

Distinctions in rank, education, comfort, &c., &c.

In one respect no distinction, for all have sinned.

No distinction also in provision of a Saviour.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism. Rom. x. 12.

But God makes distinction, in saving application of  
means offered.

Means provided, amply sufficient for end.

Power to receive truths of Gospel comes from God alone.

Scripture traces reception of Gospel truth directly to God.

The Lord opened the heart of Lydia.

Without this no amount of evidence convincing John  
xii. 37, 38.

"He casteth out devils by Beelzebub."

God's arm not revealed, therefore Christ's miracles of no  
avail.

A mysterious subject, with which need to deal cautiously.

God not the author of sin, because He withholds grace.

In leaving sinners to reap what they have sown, He acts  
consistently and justly.

Ours to admire His grace, and to ascribe to Him the glory.

The fact patent, that though all are sinners, and all have  
same grace offered, yet a distinction maintained.

To one Christ is the "Rock of ages," to another a "rock of  
offence."

To one word preached a savour of death, to another of life.  
Luke xvii. 34-36.

What is originated in time, shall be perpetuated throughout  
eternity. *Text.*

## II. IN THE ADAPTATIONS OF PROVIDENCE.

Difference in men's experience.

Refer to David's difficulty in Ps. lxxiii. 12—16.

This seems a contradiction to argument stated at outset of discourse.

But limited opportunities of observation prevent our taking a sufficiently wide induction to prove God's general method.

Besides, a peculiarity in God's treatment of His people which alters aspect of misfortune. James v. 11.

"The end of the Lord" constitutes external accidents, a profitable or injurious experience.

This seen in Ps. lxxiii. 18—20.

Termination of Job's history proves truth of James v. 11. (1st part.)

This then, the key which explains God's method.

Though Heb. xii. 6, yet the godly not *always* afflicted.

Though the wicked flourish yet not *always* prosperous.

But "end of the Lord" makes a substantial contrast in men's experience. *Text.*

Happiness depends not on external circumstances.

In the midst of luxury a man may be a discontented wretch. May be reduced to level of fiend who says, "which way I fly is hell, myself am hell."

Or may be raised above frowns of fortune, so that say "my mind to me a kingdom is."

What is source of this distinction? The grace of God.

Want of it renders worldly wealth, &c., a fatal snare.

Then, misfortunes seem like ministers of vengeance, hardening men as Rev. xvi. 11.

But grace teaches believers to regard themselves as God's stewards.

In trouble, they resign themselves to God's will.

What world counts misfortunes, they regard as blessings in disguise.

Their faith does not go without its reward. Ps. lviii. 11.

Can you thank God for difference made?

If so, be humble, it is God who makes you to differ.

Be in earnest to see that His purpose is fulfilled.

Remember distinction an eternal one.

Mal. iii. 17, 18. Then proud as stubble, while righteous as stars.

Now choose good part, and He will perfect work of grace.

## THE TITLE ON THE CROSS.

"And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."—John xix. 19.

Acts iv. 27, 28.

Every detail of the crucifixion ordained and foretold.

In the hour of His deepest humiliation proclaimed king.

Finger of God guided Pilate's hand.

Tells out His royalty to Greeks, Romans, and Jews.

Vindicates justice of his sentence by publishing the crime of the sufferer.

Also expresses His contempt for the Jews.

But compelled by a higher power to be a witness for the truth.

Draw near to cross and consider.

## I. A REPROACHFUL TITLE.

A pretender to power who fails, is exposed to contempt.

The murderer by wholesale is applauded as a conqueror.

On this basis the Roman empire was founded.

Pilate's idea of "a king," was that of a rebel seized with arms in his hands.

Hordes of robbers at this time defying the Imperial government.

The leader of such a band would have inspired Pilate with respect.

But to Jesus he says: "Art *thou* the King of the Jews?"

Surely Cæsar has nothing to fear from such a pitiful rival.

Such the King who must be enthroned in our hearts.

Are you willing to confess this rejected malefactor?

If you doubt He is your king read prophecy. Ps. xxii. 16, 17, Is. liii. 3—5.

With light from such passages, again read title, *text*.

## II. A VINDICATING TITLE.

His enemies brought many charges against Him.

Pilate by this title, vindicates His innocence.

By the Roman governor's confession, Jesus is a king.

The cross, His throne.



For His redeemed ones, He hangs there.

Where now the fear of Pilate when threatened? v. 12.

As Christ's innocence vindicated, so His people's. Ps. xxvii.  
5, 6.

How often have names of saints been covered with reproach,  
yet brought out triumphantly.\*

"Detraction's a bold monster, and fears not  
To wound the fame of princes, if it find  
But any blemish in their lives to work on."†

But none in His, yet defamed.

Heed not reproaches, but look at dying Lord. 1 Pet. iv. 14.

God changed His cross into a throne, on which read *teat*.

### III. A PROPHETICAL TITLE.

Declares His right to enter all kingdoms by His Gospel.

Written in three languages, as if to predict universality of  
His sway.

Signifies that the powerful, the wise, and the worshippers of  
God are His subjects.

So Caiaphas. John xi. 51, 52.

"Not for that nation only"—a wider design. Ps. xcvi. 10.

God bringing to pass His promise. Ps. ii. 8.

He lays foundation of His kingdom on the cross.

Not when preaching on the Mount of Beatitudes.

Not when lighting up the meaning of ancient oracles.

Not when stilling the tempest, &c.

Not when greeted with rapturous hosannahs.

If this were all, He would have been without a kingdom.

No Jerusalem would have been built; no banner of liberty  
waved; no longings for a better land excited.

The city had to be founded in the blood of the covenant.

John xii. 32, and we may ask Is. lx. 8.

Yes, that title remains the same till prophecy fulfilled.

Habbak. ii. 14.

On this solemn anniversary, be humbled.

Seek for faith to behold our King.

May He govern our spirits and hearts.

Let us swear allegiance to His sacred standard.

\* Krummacher's *Suffering Saviour*.

† P. Massinger, in *Dict. of Poetical Illustrations*.

## THE LIFTING UP OF JESUS.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."  
John xii. 32.

Introduce subject, by sketch of previous incidents from v. 20.

**I. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS "LIFTING UP!"**

V. 33 explains it—of His death.

In this sense, understood by the people, v. 34.

But it may be Scripturally understood in other senses.

For instance, to preach the gospel is to lift up Jesus.

His exaltation into heaven is a "lifting up." Acts v. 31.

See the double meaning of the word in Genesis xl. 13 and 19.

So Jesus lifted up, both to shame and glory.

Confine our attention now to former sense.

Evident allusion to type of brazen serpent. John iii. 14.

It was "lifted up" that no perishing Israelite might fail to see it.

So Jesus was "lifted up."

Believer not removed from midst of temptations but "kept from the evil."

He has a refuge continually open to him. 1 John ii. 1.

This type proves the Divine pre-determination.

In events connected with death of Christ, an entire absence of accident. So Acts ii. 23.

The salvation of man occupied mind of God from beginning.

Law and prophets testified that a plan had been devised.

Jesus must die, but die a peculiar kind of death.

John xviii. 31, a fulfilment of the *text*.

The so-called blasphemer not "stoned" but "lifted up" on cross.

This testifies to extent of His humiliation.

A punishment reserved only for slaves, and vilest criminals.

But in Christ's case, tenfold more degrading.

His claims to be the Messiah, denied.

A murderer's release demanded, instead of His.

His kingly claims derided by the Roman soldiers.

Crucified between two thieves.

Mocked in His dying agony by the spectators.

Well might He say, Lament. i. 12.

Well might the sun be darkened!

"Lifted up" with His crown of thorns, the fruit of an accursed earth.

Well may we bow our heads with shame.

But was He not then "lifted up" to glory also?

Yes, then made first successful charge on Satan's host.

As second Adam "condemned sin in the flesh."

His blood blotted out handwriting. Col. ii. 14, 15.

When He was crucified, sin and death were also crucified.

The enmity was slain—the gulph bridged over.

Once more, His "lifting up" proves that the shame of

His Cross was not intended to be concealed.

"This thing was not done in a corner." Acts xxvi. 26.

Crowds of Jews then in Jerusalem.

Everything combined to attract attention to His crucifixion.

Luke xxiv. 18.

Apostles proclaimed that their Master died a malefactor's death.

"Christ crucified" preached by every faithful minister.

In doing so, there is still the same strange mingling of humiliation and triumph.

As Ezra iii. 12, 13, so now in raising Christ's spiritual temple.

Our duty, to speed forth the message.

## II. WHAT IS THE EFFECT PRODUCED BY IT?

But all men are not so drawn to Him.

But only a general statement, setting forth its natural tendency.

We must understand it in same sense as we understand Gal. iii. 24.

Appeal to history of the Church.

This doctrine a powerful magnet to human sympathies.

It forced its way against Jewish prejudice, &c.

It has established its influence over every European nation.

In vain do infidels adduce Mohammedanism, as a parallel.

Mohammedanism was propagated by very different means.

Growth of Christianity an illustration of Zech. iv. 6.

"I will draw all men unto me," but how?

John xviii. 36. 1 Cor. i. 17. Gal. v. 24.

Not by force of arms, &c., &c.

Its attraction consists in power of God's love manifested by it.

It produces "godly sorrow for sin."

It animates our faith.

It assures us of the Divine liberality. Rom. viii. 32.

It kindles a flame of love in our hearts.

On that accursed tree is fulfilled, Cant. i. 3.

He was lifted up as a standard around which soldiers rally.

Isaiah xi. 10.

The cross sparkles with glory, to the eye of faith.

What attraction does the cross present to you?

### CHRIST'S RECORD OF HIMSELF.

"I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—Rev. i. 17, 18.

In Apocalypse, a history of the Church, from the destruction of Jerusalem, to end of time.

In view of some, it is no prophecy; John an enthusiast.

Only deniers of its inspiration will accept this view.

Rev. i. 1. "Shortly," how to be understood.

Presents history of Church in light of eternity.

John in Patmos; on Lord's day.

Revelation in Patmos connected with that on Sinai.

The vision, vs. 12—16.

John had seen transfigured Christ.

But this sight far beyond that, so that recoiled.

But Divine visitor says, "fear not," and adds *text*.

We have here Christ's record.

### I. OF HIS OWN PERSON.

(1) "I am the first and last," *i.e.*, the Eternal, v. 8.

Jesus in His humiliation testified to His own Divinity.

John viii. 58, xvii. 5, but never said "I am God."

But does so here, for based on Isaiah xlv. 6.

Unity pervading utterances of Scripture.

He is wisdom. Prov. viii. 23, 31.

Micah v. 2, John i. 1, 2, Heb. xiii. 8.

(2) "I am the living One."

Emphasis here implying more than merely enjoying existence.

The self-existent One "in whom we live and move."

John v. 26. Jehovah distinguished from heathen deities as "living God."

Man of Sorrows now departed, yet do not suppose Him dead.  
If of Abraham "God not of dead," *à fortiori* of Christ.  
"Head over all things to His Church."

## II. OF HIS OWN WORK.

Work of redemption.

(1) "I was dead." O wondrous assertion.

Yes, this He who was numbered with transgressors, &c.

Truth full of consolation.

I yielded myself to destroyer, to identify with suffering brethren.

(2) "I am alive for evermore."

Death once shattered tabernacle, but never again.

Rom. vi. 9, 10.

Lives, to fill with confidence in love and power.

Lives, as representative, forerunner, as righteous member of humanity.\*

Worm could not survive in heart of Jesus.

Old human life gone, now new life, spiritual body.

Invitation "sit thou on right hand," addressed to One who was made of dust.

Lives, as pledge of creation's ransom, seal of reconciliation, title to inheritance.

## III. OF HIS OWN OFFICE.

"And have the keys of hell and of death."

Redeemer's power over invisible world.

Hell = Hades. Death = grave.

Over these absolute authority.

Typified by Is. xxii. 22. Comp. Rev. iii. 7.

His resurrection proves power of keys.

Then takes seat on throne, tramples enemies.

Woe to those who refuse to obey. Ps. ii. 12.

When "He shutteth" no prospect of deliverance.

But wields keys for advantage of people.

Ps. lxxviii. 20.

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption. § 50.

Issues } from temporal death.  
           } from spiritual death.

Delegates this power to servants. Matt. xvi. 19.

As receive message, "power to become sons of God."

Pilate said "behold Man."

Here "behold God" wielding keys.

His glory still displayed in power of Word.

Have you experienced it?

Only thus above influence of world, "life hid with Christ."

"Your real life with Christ concealed  
 Deep in the Father's bosom lies;  
 And glorious as your Head revealed,  
 Ye soon shall meet Him in the skies."

## CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."—1 Cor. xv. 20.

The Resurrection of Christ, the most important article of Christian faith.

If rendered uncertain, all other doctrines shaken.

But St. Paul furnishes proofs in this chapter.

No doctrine so well authenticated.

Not now enter on proofs, but show.

### I. ITS BEARING ON OUR FAITH.

This the primary object of Christian faith.

If untrue, hopeless to expect salvation, vs. 14 and 17.

Jesus, the Messiah of prophecy.

Laid claim to Godhead—abrogated ceremonial law—modified Sabbath—"taught with authority."

Confirmed His claims by miracles.

Yet there were means by which enemies could evade conclusions. Mark. iii. 29.

Needed unanswerable proof; viz., His own resurrection.

His enemies feared this; "last error worse."

Hence precautions, in sealing stone.

Sense of its importance displayed, in demeanour at cross.

Matt. xxvii. 40—42.

Seen, too, in conduct of disciples. Luke xxiv. 21.

Conceive joy when Jesus manifested self.

Their faith not vain ; " the Lord is risen indeed."

As their own faith confirmed, so they appealed to it.

Rom. i. 4. 1 Pet. i. 20, 21.

Central doctrine of gospel on which others hang.

Ascension confirmed. Acts ii. 32, 33.

So future judgment. Acts xvii. 31.

## II. ITS CONNECTION WITH OUR JUSTIFICATION.

Another question tried on cross ; not only a seeming impostor before men, but a seeming sinner before God.

Sin imputed to Him as our federal Head. " Made *sin*."

Therefore submitted to curse and death.

Question : was that death sufficient to expiate sins whose guilt He bore ?

How could it be answered ? Only by His resurrection.

" Death is the wages of sin."

Tempted to ask, " Can these dry bones live ?" Can body return to life ?

Answered by our Representative ; rose in *power*.

Suppose He had not risen ? What inference ? v. 17.

But *text*, therefore reverse inference.

As no undignified haste on resurrection morn (comp. John xx. 6, 7), so solemnly laid aside sins of His people.

Consider its connection with sinner's justification.

Christ's resurrection not formal cause of our justification.

Peace effected on cross ; " It is finished."

But his resurrection was God's act of acquittal. Rom. iv. 25.

Church identified with Head.

## III. ITS RELATION TO OUR FUTURE PROSPECTS.

We need a definite hope for future.

If Christ not risen, a cloud over it, unable to penetrate veil, unsatisfied with any doctrine.

Like Pilate, would cry, " What is truth." But *text*.

Christ's resurrection earnest of all believers. John xiv. 19.

Now assured that a nobler scene awaits us.

Look forward to buried dead standing before " great white throne."

Prospect peculiar to Christianity.

In vain Greek philosophers maintained, deathless principle exists in man.

In vain urged him to trust to impartiality of Deity.  
 One link in their chain of evidence wanting.  
 Only supplied by One who could say, John xi. 25, and Rev.  
 i. 18.

Because philosophy could not do this, scepticism prevailed  
 amongst heathen.

Witness on Mars Hill. Acts xvii. 32.

Yet surely not unreasonable ; as Paul said, Acts xxvi. 8.

What so suits "fond desire and inward longing after immortality?"

But hence learn nature of future existence.

As wave sheaf specimen of harvest, so resurrection of Christ.  
 For what is resurrection? More than mere vivifying of the  
 body.

If this all, Christ not "first fruits."

But it is also the reproduction of body, in incorruptible  
 form.

Lazarus died again, but Rom. vi. 9.

Change passed over Christ's body.

Luke xxiv. 39. Why not "flesh and blood."

Nobler vital principle animating Him.

If so, we also ; sense of awe as contemplate it.

1 Cor. xv. 42—44.

Christ's body an example of "spiritual body."

Make us steadfast in faith.

Why doubt of salvation? Rom. viii. 34.

Why grovel on earth? 1 Pet. 3, 4.

What though we must die, yet gate to join those for whom  
 "Christ died, and rose, and revived."

Talk not of miseries of life, for prospect. Phil. iii. 24.

### THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

"And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians ;  
 and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant  
 Moses."—Exod. xiv. 31.

A great "hand" (margin), for hand of Lord seen.

Seen working on grand scale, foreshadowing victory of Christ.

Our Church brings the two subjects together.

Israel as a nation, and land of Canaan connected.

The people and the land related, as soul and body.\*

\* Baumgarten's Apostolic History. Vol. III. p. 131.



Exile, therefore, equivalent to death, and restoration to Canaan equivalent to resurrection. Comp. Ezekiel xxxvii. 12.

It was thus in Egypt.

Also same relationship between Jehovah and Israel as between the Father and the Son.

Hence application of prophecies regarding Israel, to Christ.

Exod. iv. 22, 23. Comp. Hos. xi. 1 with Matt. ii. 15.

By deliverance from Egypt this relationship demonstrated, so also Rom. i. 4.

Consummating act of deliverance, passage of Red Sea.

Consider character of work.

Resources of Pharaoh vast, Israelites broken-spirited slaves.

Yet here unseen power interposing.

But character best seen, if viewed in three aspects.

## I. AS A DISCRIMINATING WORK.

This kept prominently in view.

Dwelt apart in Goshen, exempted from plagues.

God fulfilling, chap. viii. 23, even to cattle.

At last seen in death of firstborn.

Continued in flight, pillar of cloud between hosts.

Completed in passage of Red Sea.

So ever, distinction between believers and ungodly.

"Elect," jewels," in opposition to "dross" and "chaff."

Enjoy favour, &c., while others left to selves.

Even when withholding material good, a compensating influence at work. Ps. xxxvii. 16.

Consummated on resurrection morn. Dan. xii. 2.

Separation of sheep from goats. Mal. iii. 18.

To which class shall you belong?

## II. AS A JUDICIAL WORK.

Infatuation of Pharaoh unaccountable.

None saw more clearly finger of God.

Promised compliance only to harden heart.

Death of firstborn overcame obstinacy, yet v. 5.

Overtook Israelites in defile.

Israelites in despair, but Moses cries "forward."

Their progress lighted by pillar of fire.

Egyptians unconscious of peril from darkness caused by pillar of cloud.\*

When morning dawned saw peril, but too late, waters closed over them.

Yet lesson failed to profit.

Descendants of these Israelites changed places with Pharaoh when Christ came.

He furnished ample credentials, yet "received him not."

Unmoved by signs at crucifixion, though Matt. xxvii. 54.

Bribed Roman soldiers to conceal His resurrection.

When Holy Spirit poured out, waged war against infant Church.

Result? Destruction of Jerusalem.

Repeated in aggravated form by Christians.

Unfettered by Jewish prejudices.

See in Christian Church, a standing witness of Christ's resurrection.

Its members, living examples of power of resurrection.

A continuous resurrection of dead souls going on.

Yet unmoved. Is it so with you?

Like Pharaoh hardening heart, deserve reproach. Acts vii. 57.

Yield, lest experience severity of Divine judgment.

### III. AS A GLORIOUS WORK.

All attributes of Jehovah vindicated.

Moses threw down gauntlet, not to secular power of Pharaoh, but to his gods.

Egyptians worshippers of nature and domestic animals.

Against these the plagues were directed, the first, dishonouring the Nile, which they called "the father of the gods."

Honour gotten by Jehovah culminated in tenth plague.

Comp. xii. 12 with Numb. xxxiii. 4.†

Domestic animals incarnations of deity, and those in the temples probably the firstborn.

Imagine consternation when dead in one night.

A superstitious people would be filled with despair.

So, easy to show how power, justice, faithfulness, and truth vindicated.

So in resurrection of Jesus Christ.

\* *Vide* Kurtz's *Hist. of Old Covenant*, Vol. II., p. 341.

† *Vide* Kurtz, vol. II., p. 291.

God's wisdom in consenting to Son's humiliation.

Satan's head bruised.

Weakest believer defy His malice and power.

Twofold effect produced.

(1.) A regard for God's authority.

(2.) A confidence in God's protection.

## THE SUBSTANCE OF CHRISTIAN TESTIMONY.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."—1 John v. 11.

This Epistle written to oppose Gnosticism.

Simplicity of Gospel truths offensive to philosophical pride.

Heretics manipulated them to suit their own views.

Here a re-statement of fundamental principles.

Especially of person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Uses language of studied simplicity.

In *text*, subject matter of whole Epistle condensed.

The "record" or "witness" a favourite word of St. John.

Dates back from Acts i. 8, comp. vs. 21, 22.

None entered more fully into spirit of office, than John.

Labours to imitate Jesus, "the faithful witness."

Cite only one example, John xix. 34, 35.

John's duty, to bear record to reality of Christ's human nature.

But also connected with 1 John v. 6, comp. John i. 33, 34.

Baptism of water followed by baptism of blood.

The water and blood two witnesses, but also a third, the Spirit.

Read verses 7 and 8, leaving out interpolation.

This also the witness of God, v. 9, yea of each believer, v. 10.

Then, states substance of this testimony. *Text*.

## I. "GOD HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE."

Consciousness of immortality dimmed by sin.

Yet aspirations after future existence cannot be destroyed.

On this point, Christ brought light.

God willeth not death of sinner, nay promised, Ch. ii. 25.

The innate consciousness of immortality an argument for its reality.  
 But to drag out a cheerless existence, no boon. Job. vii. 15.  
 Not such life spoken of here.  
 "Let the king live" means let him enjoy prosperity, etc.  
 Natural life all enjoy, but this far higher.  
 Made over to believers already, so that "rejoice in hope."  
 Declared to be a gift.  
 Not to be achieved by human effort.  
 The young Ruler (Luke xviii. 18) a mere novice in spiritual things.  
 Always so till taught by Holy Spirit.  
 They forget the master's saying, Luke xvii. 10.  
 Remember, hell alone can be merited, Rom. vi. 23.  
 You must recognize life as a gift.

## II. "THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON."

Sinner hopeless under sentence, so long as no atonement made.  
 But Christ has abolished death.  
 Consecrated Himself in the Jordan, and then, Phil. ii. 8.  
 As our Representative in grave, we might say "our hope is lost."  
 But God raised Him up, and we participate. John xi. 25.  
 Delivered from power of sin, Rom. vi. 14.  
 The water a witness of interest in Christ. Col. ii. 12.  
 The blood too bears witness for Heb. ix. 13, 14.  
 Above all, the witness of the Spirit.  
 Fundamental truths of Christianity denied in John's day.  
 So in every age of the Church.  
 We have seen doctrines of Trinity, incarnation, atonement, etc. denied.  
 Others openly violate articles and formularies.  
 A national Church demands latitude of opinion, but its limits may be overstepped.  
 Our duty to set forth Christ as the life of men.  
 See that you enjoy that eternal life.  
 Don't profess to be believers, and yet show life uninfluenced for then, Jude 12.  
 Where a mere nominal Christianity professed, dangerous doctrines abound.  
 Be found in Christ, then enjoy witness.

## THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you ; as my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained."—John xx. 21—23.

Three primary ordinances in Church : the Word, sacraments, prayer.

Three secondary ordinances : the Lord's day, solemn assemblies, a standing ministry.

Here mind of Christ declared on the three last.

Now lingering on the scene of His sufferings to make final arrangements previous to His departure.

First solemnly sets apart a day of rest.

Gives no positive verbal precept, for Sabbath existed from the beginning.

By significant actions, He makes alteration in day of observance.

V. 19 comp. with v. 1 shows importance attached to it by the Evangelist.

"Remember the Sabbath day" still a rule for Christians.

Next, stamps with His approval, assemblies for public worship on this day.

Apostles and disciples meet with closed doors, in terror.

Hardly met for worship, but rather common sentiment of sorrow drew them together.

But v. 19, thus fulfilling His promise.

So we, assembling ourselves in faith, shall realize blessedness of His presence.

The command remains in force for all time. Heb. x. 25.

But now direct attention to His ordination of a standing ministry.

Observe it is :

## I. A MINISTRY OF PEACE.

Christ's sudden appearance excites disciple's alarm.

In a nervous, excited state, predisposed to be alarmed even at shadows.

But the risen Jesus no messenger of terror, v. 21.

Truly a resurrection-greeting, an exhibition of peace-tokens.

Connection proclaimed between His wounds and that peace.  
Now He effectually conveys legacy bequeathed before His death.

It tells them not to hide behind closed doors, but proclaim in places of concourse "Jesus and the resurrection."

The assurance too that all their past defections are forgotten and forgiven.

Yea, more ; the signal for dispersion of all doubts and misgivings.

Produced same effect on their souls as on storm-tossed waters of Galilee's lake.

Constituted messengers of peace to others.

Our privilege to proclaim peace with God, peace of conscience, and peace between man and man.

## II. AN AUTHORITATIVE MINISTRY.

Here Jesus formally gives them commission as "apostles," v. 21.

The Father's great apostle sends them as subordinate apostles. How careful He is to define accurately the way in which He sends them.

How much involved in "as." Comp. Luke xxii. 29, John xvii. 18.

It testifies to authority of sender.

As valid as commission to Isaiah or Ezekiel.\*

Proclaims character and duties of the ministry.

Did the Father send Jesus? Matt. xx. 28, John vi. 38, Matt. v. 17. So Jesus sends us.

Did He send Him to bear witness to the truth? So Jesus sends us.

Did He send Him. Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. So Jesus sends us.

Ours to proclaim Christ's kingdom established, and to invite sinners to become His subjects.

## III. AN EFFECTIVE MINISTRY.

This arises from a twofold cause :

(1) From a bestowal of the Spirit. v. 22.

A significant act. Holy Spirit spoken of as breath. Job xxxiii. 4.

\* Matthew Henry's Commentary *in loco*.

Testimony to Christ's Godhead, and to identification with Word as Creator.

Crowning act of creation, the formation of man by God breathing into him the breath of life.

Now Jesus breathes on disciples as author of new creation.

True, Holy Ghost not given till day of Pentecost.

But here preparatory pledge of future richer outpouring.

The Christian ministry a living witness of power of Christ's resurrection.

Preaching, emphatically a benefaction of the resurrection.

Persons thrust themselves into this sacred office without being called of God.

But happily others anointed with Holy Ghost, "fishers of men." 1 Cor. ii. 13.

Be it ours thus to approve ourselves as ministers of Christ.

1 Thess. ii. 1.

(2.) **From authority given to remit and retain sins.** v. 23.

A very solemn dispensation here committed to the Church. Nothing to do with Romish dogmas of confession, penance, and absolution.

Easy to see how this power was exercised by the Apostles.

Acts ii. 38—v. 5, 10—viii. 21.

But also designed as a general charter for all time.

Must be viewed in connection with context, as that which is to be exercised in, and through ordinance of preaching.

Our duty to declare whole counsel of God.

If you accept, we declare your sins pardoned.

Thus act not as usurping God's functions but as interpreters of His word, giving effect to it, as priests pronounced suspected leper clean or unclean.

Not an empty unmeaning form, for God says amen to our words, as hearer's consciences often testify.

Once more, not exclusive prerogative of an ordained ministry.

It belongs to the Church at large.

Entrusted, like Christ's other gifts, to those who shall hereafter judge the world.

A gift to "sanctified personalities."\*

Such far better fitted to exercise it, than many so-called "priests."

\* Stier's Words of the Lord Jesus, Vol. VIII., p. 173

To you, has this awful trust been committed.  
 A power felt and acknowledged by worldly persons.  
 Consider what manner of persons ye ought to be.  
 How earnestly ought you to stir up the gift of God within  
 you.  
 How faithful and earnest ought you to be.

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### THE MOURNER'S MISTAKE.

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre."—John xx. 11.

She had come thither with Peter and John.  
 A common bond united these three in their quest.  
 Their worst fears realized—the two disciples return.  
 But Mary could not tear herself away. *Text.*  
 Mary's experience not singular.  
 Vacant chair, &c. brings home sense of irreparable loss.  
 Yet proclaims our dulness of perception.  
 Our wisdom to look within—"He is not here, He is risen."

### I. THE MOURNER'S MISTAKE.

Not an unnatural mistake to make.  
 Her heart disposed to say, "I do well to weep."  
 Sense of bereavement most keenly felt by refined natures.  
 Mary had been lifted out of herself by intercourse with  
 Jesus.  
 Picture her feelings of hope and fear during progress of  
 His trial.  
 Hope died as she gazed on His cross.  
 But reality of bereavement felt even more strong at empty  
 tomb.  
 No wonder gave way to passionate outburst of grief. *Text.*  
 Yet how little cause for sorrow!  
 Weighting herself with the unreal sorrows of her own  
 disordered fancy.  
 The empty grave spoke of resurrection.  
 So we misinterpret the voice of the tomb.



Regard the bereavement as a calamity.  
Like Mary we are blinded by our tears.

## II. ITS CAUSE.

Mary's spiritual perceptions far from being acute.  
Knew Saviour's promise, that He would rise again.  
Like sisters of Lazarus, referred it to last day.  
So our grief attributable to want of faith.  
To bereaved Christian, Scripture reveals enough to inspire  
with faith and patience.

### (1.) It tells us where our departed friends are.

They are not in the shadowy Elysian fields of heathen  
mythology.

They are not in purgatory.

They are not in a state of unconsciousness.

They are "with the Lord."

How much involved in that statement.

"Why do we mourn departing friends,  
Or shake at death's alarms?  
'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends  
To call them to His arms.

Why should we tremble to convey  
Their bodies to the tomb?  
There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,  
And left a sweet perfume.

The graves of all the saints He blessed,  
And softened every bed;  
Where should the dying members rest,  
But with their dying Head?"

### (2.) It tells us why their bodies are laid in the grave.

Ours is a body of humiliation in which are elements of decay.  
While in union with soul, a conflict goes on with these  
elements.

Body exhibits a marvellous recuperative energy.

But at death, it succumbs to action of decay.

Then cry raised, "bury my dead out of my sight."

Grave hides action of decay—to rise a glorious body.

1 Cor. xv. 42-44. As look on this picture and on that, we  
smile at our mistake.

Grave, the guardian of our dust,  
 Grave, the treasury of the skies ;  
 Every atom of its dust  
 Rests in hope again to rise.

### III. ITS CURE.

Mary's mistake rectified by Christ.

Her seeking love finds ample reward.

We must imitate her conduct to share her reward.

Some here have watched dying relative.

Find your way from the grave of dear one, to cross of  
 Calvary.

Christ stands near to console you.

If you cannot discern his presence, wait like Mary.

Death comes to all.

To whom shall we betake ourselves for consolation ?

Shall we go to the Stoic?—the Secularist?—or the Pantheist?  
 Ingenious though their theories may be, forced to say, Job

xvi. 2.

Their cold comfort may well make us weep for ourselves.

But Christ has lighted up darkness of grave.

No need to fear when He has gone before. Ps. xxiii. 4.

Yes, death comes to all.

Bound to ask, "Am I prepared to meet my God?"

How are we to meet supreme crisis of our fate?

Job iii. 3 is what we want.

We want recreating, 2 Cor. v. 17.

### THE MODEL MAN.

'Leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps.'—1 Pet. ii. 21.

Man impelled to aim at what lies beyond.

Disposition to admire and imitate great men.

"Lives of great men all remind us  
 We can make our lives sublime,  
 And departing, leave behind us  
 Footprints in the sands of time,

Footprints, that perhaps another,  
 Sailing o'er life's solemn main ;  
 A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother,  
 Seeing, shall take heart again."

\* Longfellow.

Scripture presents noblest model for our imitation.

Mere human greatness is always stained by defects and sin.

Take Lord Bacon for instance, "the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind."

But there are no defects in Jesus of Nazareth.

Evangelists narrate each others' failings, but record none of His.

He was no monkish recluse, cheating the world with a spurious sanctity.

Everywhere watched by crowds of observers, yet always *test.*

Consider :

## I. THE AIM OF CHRIST'S LIFE.

Important to have a clear, well-defined object.

Without this like Reuben, at the mercy of every foolish suggestion.

We see such persons, attempting many things, failing in all, men

" Whose life without a plan  
As useless as the moment it began,  
Serves only as a soil for discontent  
To thrive in ; an encumbrance ere half spent."\*

But Jesus had one great object—the glory of God.

He thus teaches us what is "the chief end of man"

What caused "the morning stars to sing together?"

Not the beauteous primeval earth, not the newly-created human pair, but the fact that fresh voices were now created to raise the song of praise to Jehovah.

But Satan rendered this discordant—did He destroy the counsel of God ?

No ; for had mankind been destroyed, there were immortal Spirits who could say Rev. xv. 3.

But how much more was God glorified by the atonement of Christ.

He never lost sight of that object. John xii. 28, xvii. 4.

Compared with His devotion, how frivolous our lives appear.

Alas, that the lives of so many of us should be only,

\* Cowper.

“ A painful passage o’er a restless flood,  
 A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,  
 A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care,  
 Closing at last in darkness and despair.”

Awake ! Hear Christ say John xv. 8.

## II. THE LABORIOUSNESS OF CHRIST'S LIFE

As one “ made under the law,” Jesus had to learn a trade.  
 Mark vi. 3. Helped to support His reputed Father’s family.

No need to be ashamed of humility of His birth and station.

He put the stamp of nobility on labour.

He, the second Adam, took away the curse, changed it into a blessing.

Teaches us that labour brings contentment.

I pity the man who is ashamed of his early struggles.

Was Paul ashamed of honest toil ? Acts xx. 34.

Diligent industry secures self-respect and security.

“ Satan finds some mischief still  
 For idle hands to do.”

Christianity does not call to idleness, but Ecc. ix. 10.

But we fail thus, to show laboriousness of Christ’s life.

He ceased from manual labour after His baptism.

But not idle—went about doing good.

No moment of his time unoccupied.

His life was one of self-devotion—love giving away itself.

Meditate on that life, *text*.

## III. THE HABITUAL PIETY MANIFESTED IN CHRIST'S LIFE.

Constantly in the habit of prayer, though without sin.

Found sweetest enjoyment in communion with God.

His example gives weight to His precept, Matt. vi. 6.

His humanity found support in prayer.

How much greater need for us to practise it.

Again, pass by His habitual blessing food before partaking.

Dwell on custom of frequenting synagogue on Sabbath.

Appeal to those who are careless in this duty.

The Church the banqueting-house of God’s grace.

Prize the assembly of saints. Ps. xxvi. 8.

Easy to see we have omitted much.  
 Said nothing of His wisdom—gentleness—large-heartedness.  
 Said nothing of patience as example to slaves.  
 Lesson needed to be enforced in these days of “strikes.”

Meditate on these things.  
 Thus become conformed to image of Christ.

## THE BEARER AND HIS BURDEN.

“Who his own self bear our sins in His own body on the tree.”  
 1 Pet. ii. 24.

The perfection of Jesus Christ the true model for mankind.  
 To Him the Apostles always point. v. 21.  
 Never weary of dilating on His perfections.  
 Human saints only faint reflections of the Sun of Righteousness.

He is the true model man.

But we must go further to view Him as God.  
 We want the impartation of power to walk in His steps.  
 We must view Him not only as our Prophet, but also as  
 Priest, and King.

Comp. 1 John i. 7 and ii. 6, 2, and *text*.

## I. THE BEARER.

“Who” refers back to v. 21.

He is a man. John xix. 5.

He is an innocent man. John xviii. 38, Luke xxiii. 15,  
 Matt. xxvii. 19.

He is a royal personage. Matt. xxvii. 37.

He is a Divine Being. Matt. xxvii. 54.

Well be filled with awe, as we contemplate Him.

Such is the priest, but where is the sacrifice?

Gen. xxiii. 7.

“His own Self”—not an angel.

Not hecatombs of victims. Heb. x. 4.

Not offerings of gold or silver. Ps. xlix. 6, 7.

He gave Himself. Heb. x. 6, 7.

He kept back no part of Himself.

Refer to heresy of Cerinthus and the Ebionites.

Compare also Acts xx. 28, 1 John iii. 16.

The work of atonement needed the union of the Godhead and manhood.

"He came between mortal men and immortal God; mortal with men and just with God. As man He suffered, as God He satisfied, as God and man He saved." \*

With such a Saviour, who need betake himself to a saint?  
Fools are all such,

"Who vainly deem the mirage true  
With living waters in their view."

ObeY God's exhortation. Isaiah xlii. 1.

## II. HIS BURDEN. "Our sins."

Unconverted sinner thinks lightly of sin. Prov.  
But let us estimate it in the balance of the sanctuary.  
Jesus had all fulness of knowledge, therefore He felt its weight.

Ps. lxxvi. 7, comp. Ps. xl. 12.

Is that a light matter which brings down eternal vengeance?

Is that a light matter which made Job say vi. 4?

Is that a light matter which makes creation groan?

Is that a light matter which extorts the cry Rom. vii. 24?

But concentrated load on Him. Is. liii. 6.

They met on Him and He made them His own.

Surely no trifling load which could so strangely move Him.

Martyrs have borne their torments with firmness.

They have embraced the stake with joy.

Since we know the source of their strength, we conclude that

His sufferings must have been unparalleled.

He recked little of bodily torture.

Go to Gethsemane. Luke xxii. 44, Mark xiv. 34.

Every talent of our sin laid on Him. Amos ii. 33.

At length He cried "It is finished."

O sinner, can you thoughtlessly dally with sin?

But consider importance of the word "bare."

Constantly used both in Old and New Testament in connection with sin.

(1.) It implies substitution.

Jesus bare the punishment of our sins.

\* Adams' Works, Vol. II. p. 427.

Comp. Levit. xxiv. 15, Numb. xiv. 34, Heb ix. 28.  
Divine justice satisfied—way into holiest opened.

(2.) It implies obliteration.

He lifted them up and carried them away. John 1. 29.  
Typified by the scape-goat.  
God beholds believers in Christ.

Have you felt the guilt of sin?  
Are you able to rejoice that Christ has borne the burden of  
your sin.

### THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

"And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole; and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived." Num. xxi. 9.

History ever repeating itself.  
The past, an index of what will occur in future.  
Especially so with history of God's chosen people.  
Spiritual truths darkly shadowed forth, for "fulness of time"  
to make clear.  
So with brazen serpent, of which Christ says John iii. 14, 15.

### I. THE DISEASE.

Called fiery serpents, why?  
Describe effects of poison on human frame.  
A lively representation of effects of sin.  
Seen in incapacity for God's society or service.  
Sin has disturbed moral harmony of universe.  
Death reigns, and in its train a hideous array of sufferings.  
Human language stamped with evidences of sin's deadly  
influence, *e.g.*, "mortal" for man.\*  
Infects all, for "all have sinned."  
Exists as plague-spot in the very infant.  
Sin an open sore, impairing usefulness of institutions of  
Christian philanthropy.  
Sinner lives for himself, making self standard of right and  
wrong, so becoming blind to existence of sin.

\* Max Muller quoted by Monsell in *Hist. of Redemption*, p. 28.

Hence virtues themselves arrayed in independence against God.

Amiability, self-devotion, energy, patience, but not for God.\*  
Thus noblest natures banded against God.

Alas! sin has done its work. Isaiah i. 5, 6.

"O wretched man that I am!"

## II. THE REMEDY.

Notice rationalistic explanations.

Effects of excited fancy in removing bodily ailments, &c.†

Intended to put people on their guard.

Sign of military hospital.

'Too ridiculous for serious consideration. Consider

(1.) *Its strangeness.*

God competent to remove serpents, v. 7.

But not so, camp still infested, but remedy prescribed.

Strange remedy! nay, inconsistent with Exod. xx. 4.

So Jewish Rabbis, who failed to see difference between God's command and man's superstition.

Brazen serpent not to be worshipped, representation of Jehovah's healing power.

Wounded Israelite would feel force of Exod. xv. 26 (ult.)

Turn to antitype.

God's people not exempt from sin and temptation.

Monasticism a spurious religious sentiment.

Comp. 1 Cor. v. 10 with John xvii. 15.

Believer alive to sinfulness, but 1 John ii. 1.

As brazen serpent, so Christ the sinless One.

True key, 2 Cor. v. 21.

As image of serpent *versus* poisonous serpents, so "made sin" *versus* real sin.

Marvellous condescension!

Then "condemned sin in flesh," exhibition of God's hatred of it.

Impelled to gaze in adoring faith, so John xii. 32.

How lifted up? John iii. 14.

Wounded Israelite enraged at sight of image of cause of his pain, but feelings changed at finding sight healed him.

So Christ lifted up as malefactor. Isaiah liii. 4.

\* W. Archer Butler, quoted by Monsell, p. 35.

† Kurtz Hist. of Old Covenant, vol. iii., 345.



See sign of our transgression, representation of our guilt.  
But lifted up to glory also.  
Sin, death, and Satan crucified in Him. Col. ii. 14, 15.  
Lifted up in resurrection and ascension. Acts v. 31.  
Lifted up in preaching of gospel.  
Lifted up in ordinance of Lord's Supper.

(2.) *Its effectiveness.*

No failure.

"The wounded looked and straight were cured,  
The people ceased to die."

So sinner gazing on cross finds plague healed.  
If remedy fails, whose fault? 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.  
Cross continually celebrating its triumphs.  
Doctrines mysterious, but God His own interpreter.  
Proves to world that the cross not an unmeaning sign.  
To-night I bid you gaze.  
Are you humbled by the sight?  
Are you crucified with Christ?  
Or has old serpent bewitched you that you do not feel need  
of cure?  
From cross of shame Christ says, "Go in peace, thy faith  
hath made thee whole."

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### THE CHURCH'S GRIEF AND THE WORLD'S JOY.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."—John xvi. 20.

Contrast between believers and worldly men.  
Both subject to fluctuations, but end different.  
Carnal mirth of latter succeeded by "worm."  
With former, "at evening time there shall be light."  
Christ says to His disciples in v. 16, what previously  
said to Jews.  
Throws light upon it in text.  
"A little while," under power of death.  
"A little while," return triumphant from grave.  
Yet only "a little while," for must ascend to heaven.  
At His cross they would grieve, but world rejoice.

Grief changed at His resurrection.

Even now sorrowed in anticipation, yet v. 22.

Joy beyond reach of human malignity, for work of Holy Spirit.

Statement of text true for all time ;

## I. GRIEF OF CHURCH.

Not reassuring words.

Not what might have expected from, Matt. xi. 29.

The soul needs assurance of future happiness.

Religion, especially Christianity, professes to give this.

But it reminds, at same time of our fallen sinful condition.

Christ Himself "a man of sorrows."

In full view of cross, directs disciples attention to it.

The cross, a vivid exhibition of sinfulness of sin.

Though disciples not His crucifiers, yet conscious of share in it.

See sin in own hearts, as well as sin without.

Yes, church seems alone, her banner a bloody cross, her leader an absent Jesus.

Therefore, though really "not alone," well, "weep and lament."

Two kinds of departure affording sorrow (1). to cross, and (2) to heaven.

But second ! chap. xiv. 28.

As lovers and friends rejoice in Master's advancement.

Yet also excuse for sorrow in temporary separation.

Presence of Christ in Church by Holy Spirit.

But spirit works by natural means, so that sin has opportunity to sow seed.

Believers have to struggle to reach the light.

Christ often seems withdrawn—state of orphanhood—under regulation of natural laws.

Unbelief prevails ; God's existence disowned.

"Science has shown us that we are under the dominion of general laws, and that there is no special Providence. Nature acts with fearful uniformity ; stern as fate, absolute as tyranny, merciless as death ; too vast to praise, too inexplicable to worship, too inexorable to propitiate ; it has no ear for prayer, no heart for sympathy, no arm to save."\*

With such language well ask, Luke xviii. 8.

\* Holyoake quoted in Farrar's Critical History of Free Thought, p. 441.

May not church well mourn Him as dead to such as these?  
Yes, Bride weeps for her own blindness and ignorance; for  
the sufferings of others; and for hardened sinners.

## II. JOY OF WORLD.

Ignorance exhibits levity in danger.  
Seen in foolhardiness resulting in fatal accidents.  
So world, leave future to its fate, "let us eat and drink."  
What does it care for departure of Christ?  
Nay, was He not the Mordecai in the gate, and therefore it  
will institute a new Purim feast.\* Rev. xi. 10.  
It will "part His garments" under idea of being rid of Him.  
"Tush! God shall not see."

Thus grief of church intensified by joy of world.  
A natural craving for sympathy.  
But "world rejoices." Ps. xxxv. 15, 16.  
Faith in danger of giving way. Ps. xlii. 9, 10.  
But Christ's promise on record, therefore, Ps. xlii. 11.

## III. GRIEF OF CHURCH TURNED TO JOY.

As Jesus broke through death to life, so disciples through  
sorrow to joy.  
Their joy an internal process wrought by the Holy Spirit.  
Under the cross learned to sorrow for sin, while world's joy  
dissipated old dream of Messiah's kingdom.  
Emerge through participation in power of Christ's resur-  
rection, from sorrow to joy.  
*Text* fulfilled when through spirit, realize personal interest  
in Christ's atonement.  
John xx. 20 (ult) ever being fulfilled in Holy Spirit's work.  
Earnest of more perfect joy.  
Its fruition an "eternal weight of glory."  
How different world's joy.  
Like crackling of thorns under pot.  
Who has tried world, and not been disappointed?  
How needful to cast in our lot with Christ?

\* Stier. Vol. VI. p. 380.

## THE SOUL'S CONFLICT.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."—1 Pet. ii. 11.

Peter presents instance of blessed results of Christ's tenderness.

Denied his Master in High Priest's palace.

Reinstated in office after our Lord's resurrection.

The charge laid upon him, Luke xxii. 31, 32.

Here we see him fulfilling his charge, *text*.

## I. THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARACTER.

Interest manifested by Christians in each other's welfare.

Astonished Pagan world—"see how these Christians love each other."

Christianity intensifies natural benevolence of disposition.

So here "dearly beloved," as having a common character and danger.

They are "strangers, &c.," in the world but not of it. John xv. 19.

World unsuited to be their permanent abode.

They now dwell in it, but do not regard it as their home.

Home! What magic there is in that word!

Where is the Christian's home? Not where Mammon reigns, &c.

This world does not realize aspirations of Christian. Micah ii. 7.

Faith points to better home. Ps. xvii. 15.

Thus like patriarchs of old. Heb. xi. 13.

Is this the case with you?

## II. THE CHRISTIAN'S DANGER.

Travellers exposed to many perils.

We come into the world with a sin-infected nature.

The fall has perverted faculties, concentrating them on unworthy objects.

Tendency of unrenewed man to fill up void by wretched substitutes.\*

Conceptions of happiness confined to mere creature good.

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption. Section 12.

Lives in darkness and sorrow, or in frivolous contentment worse than any sorrow.

His happiness is ignorance of his own misery. See Eph. iv. 18, 19.

From this condition the believer is rescued.

Imperious lusts now held in check. Gal. ii. 20.

Yet they still exhibit a degree of vitality.

Christianity a slow convalescence from a mortal disease.

Lusts ever and anon receive fresh accession of strength from some unexpected quarter.

"Make war against the soul." What expressive language.

Consider their array. Gal. v. 19—21. How hopeless the conflict!

But you say, "these are not the spots of God's children."

These bespeak one held captive by the devil.

But ah! do not Christians suffer Canaanites to remain in borders.

They are no adulterers, yet encourage unchaste thoughts.

They are no idolators, yet is Mammon enthroned in hearts.

They are no murderers, yet suffer tongues to circulate slanderous reports.

They are no drunkards, yet the bottle is constantly on their table.

If so, is not the old man still directing onslaughts of lust?

Danger not only assails nominal Christians, but believers.

An indolence of disposition of which conscious like 2 Kings xiii. 18, 19.

We are disposed to appeal like Lot, Gen. xix. 20.

Apt to take over favourable view of little failings.

Hence the charge, Cant. ii. 15.

Must be dealt with like Babylon's children. Ps. cxxxvii. 9.

Stunted growth in grace often owing to shielding cherished lust.

Ps. xix. 12. We need to bring them to God.

### III. THE CHRISTIAN'S SAFEGUARD. "Abstain."

Parley with sin and it will deal treacherously with you.

It must be held at arm's length.

Total abstinence is the only wise policy.

What hope for the drunkard but in this?

Is he the only one to whom it should be recommended?

Do not drinking customs impair spiritual vitality of so-called temperate Christians?

Are we not called to stand in breach and abstain for example's sake?

As half and half Christians we never can win the prize. There is "a sin which doth so easily beset us." Christ has delivered us from dominion as well as guilt of sin. If we are not crucifying the flesh, we are crucifying the Lord afresh.

Go again to gaze on His cross, and then renew journey as pilgrims.

### BALAAM.

"Through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the Lord."—Jer. ix. 6.

This world a scene of preparation for eternity.

God has provided means for our discipline.

Yet men refuse to profit by it.

Hence God complains, saying Is. i. 3, Hos. xi. 7, Matt. xxiii. 37.

Yet the sinner acknowledges he is bound to obey his Creator.

He will not admit that he is a wilful rebel.

Seeks a plausible excuse for his conduct and thus *text*.

How wide-spread is this source of evil.

It is illustrated in the career of Balaam.

Consider

## I. HIS COVETOUSNESS.

Prominence of Balaam's history in Book of Numbers.

Evidently designed to attract our attention.

Sketch the narrative.

Not pause to ask was he a worshipper of Jehovah.

It is plain he knew something of God and His will with regard to Israel.

It was His duty therefore to warn Balaam not to meddle with them.

But "the rewards of divination" were too powerful for him.

He tries to induce God to change His purpose.

He receives the answer, Numb. xxii. 20.

Yet He knew it was given him in anger.

It was like God's answer to Israel, in Hos. xiii. 11.

But it was enough—he joyfully sets out, and thus *text*.

We have one who teaches better things than Balaam.

Christ's prayer, "not my will but Thine be done."

Our duty is to yield entire submission to His will.

Acquiescence with that will secure our truest happiness.

But men are blindly attached to material good.

Like the elder son in parable they desire something apart from God.

Men cling to "filthy lucre" and make it their God.

Their eyes blinded to folly of idolatry and thus *text*.

## II. HIS SELF-DECEPTION.

He flatters himself he is not to be blamed, because permission given to him to proceed.

Yet he has hardly set out, when he receives a convincing proof of the anger with which God views his conduct.

The angel of the Lord met him. Numb. xxii. 22—24.

Balaam deceives himself by a pretended submission.

Fear of death awakens momentary sense of duty.

When that subsides he relapses into former course. *Text*.

We see the same thing in everyday life.

Self-deception is constantly at work. Jer. vii. 13, 14.

But men are often brought face to face with their Judge.

Sickness and death often force them to consider their ways.

Then like Balaam they say Numb. xxiii. 34.

They adopt resolutions of amendment.

But with returning health these are abandoned.

They begin to doubt and deliberate, then proceed to act dishonestly.\*

They trifle with conscience and God's Holy Spirit.†

They manifest an utter want of child-like simplicity.

Matt. vi. 22.

## III. HIS END.

Balaam saw enough to induce him to act differently.

Numb. xxiv. 17.

He carelessly utters blessings for others to appreciate.

His knowledge of God unsanctified.

\* Bishop Butler's Sermon on the character of Balaam.

† Robertson's Sermon on Numb. xxii. 34, 35, vol. iv.

Teaches Moab to draw God's anger on Israel.  
 In the war that ensued he fell. Numb. xxxi. 8.  
 Such the end of the man who could say Numb. xxiii. 10.  
 Such the last act of him who could say Numb. xxiv. 5.  
 How solemnly does the narrative appeal to us!  
 Do we not hope that the Christian's end may be ours?  
 Do we not admire the security of the believer?  
 Yes, but yet the end of Balaam may be yours.  
 Vital Godliness means more than wishing and hoping.  
 It is watching and praying. Heb. vi. 11, 12.

### THE BELIEVER AND THE WORD.

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls."  
 —James i. 21.\*

Our position here, "strangers and pilgrims."  
 Our true aspiration to secure rest in God.  
 Directions furnished in Word.  
 The charge given to us as travellers. 1 Pet. ii. 11.  
 A general injunction.  
 Also particular direction in studying Word, *text*.  
 Suggests three topics :

### I. OUR PREPARATION FOR THE WORD.

Salvation all of grace.  
 Yet God deals with us as rational beings.  
 A duty imposed and consequent responsibility.  
 The charge "seek ye my face."  
 Seek God in Word, for which we must prepare.  
 Trim lamps; tune instrument.  
 Solomon says, "keep thy foot," and Christ, "take heed how ye hear."  
 Here specific form of preparation.  
 One dictated by common sense, as Jer. iv. 3.  
 Word pure, therefore not assimilate with filthy nature.  
 Some deal with sin as Gen. xxii. 5.  
 Do not deceive yourselves by acting thus.  
 Language used to excite loathing.

\* Manton's Commentary *in loco*.



Modern euphemisms, but Holy Spirit calls by right name.

All sin "filthiness" why?

Renders even duties detestable, so that God says Mal. ii. 3.

Yet stronger expression, "abundance of malignity."

Sin deluged whole framework of society.

Hardens heart, conscience, affections, &c.

Makes members instruments of unrighteousness ; eyes, feet, hands, tongue.

Here refers especially to last, *context*.

So 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. Prejudice against Word.

When conscience aroused, men exasperated against preacher.

So Acts vii. 57, xvii. 32, John viii. 48.

Ask God for docility : "Speak, Lord, for servant heareth."

## II. OUR DUTY TOWARDS THE WORD.

In Gospel, hand of God's bounty, calling for our hand of faith.

Three acts implied in receiving Word.

(1) Act of understanding, "let sayings sink," &c.

(2) Act of faith, else Heb. iv. 2.

(3) Act of will and affections "receiving truth in love," as Cant. iii. 4.

"With meekness" positive side of former direction.

In humble submissive spirit, Ps. xxv. 9.

In tractable frame of mind, with broken heart, and with desire to close in with Christ.

Fools "reject counsel of God against themselves."

Consider expression "with meekness."

Sets forth potentiality of Word as seed sown.

Is fulfilment of Jer. xxxi. 33.

Then realize v. 18 and 1 Pet. i. 23.

Thus see duty, receive it that 1 John iii. 9.

## III. OUR EXPERIENCE UNDER THE WORD.

If realize value of soul, no more desirable result.

True "what shall we eat," &c.

Yet short-sighted policy for "strangers and pilgrims."

What avail soldier if scabbard polished, but sword rusty.

What avails wealth, if bankrupt for eternity.

Matt. xvi. 26. Therefore show true wisdom.

No mightier engine ever framed.

As Christ set for fall and rise, so Word.

2 Cor. x. 4. Acts xx. 32.

With such a weapon what wonder, Rom. i. 16.

Try it.

Emancipate from power of sin "follow holiness."

Deliver from fear of death.

Extricate from god of this world.

Word sounded often, has it taken root?

Treasures been unlocked by Holy Ghost.

Has grace taught you to deny ungodliness?

Have you laid aside filthiness?

Don't trifle. Institute search.

Let it be food of meditation.

"Be doers of Word."

## THE DECALOGUE.

"And he declared unto you his covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone."—Deut. iv. 13.\*

The term "law" variously employed, but usually designated the Ten Commandments.

Occupied a peculiar place in Mosaic code.

Spoken by God's voice; delivered under impressive circumstances.

Contained whole of covenant; comp. Exod. xxxiv. 28.

Kept in the ark, within the Holy of Holies.

Referred to by Christ and His Apostles as "the law."

In sermon on Mount refers to it; also Matt. xix. 18.

So St. Paul. Rom. ii. 21, 22; Rom. vii. 7.

Consider then:

## I. THE PERFECTION OF THE DECALOGUE.

Its confessedly high character, as standard of rectitude.

Taken in connection with state of morals at time of its publication, a proof of its divine origin.

No mere man could have invented it. Exod. viii. 19.

\* This outline is based upon the chapter on "The Decalogue" in Fairbairn's *Typology*, vol. II.

Hindoos said to Dr. Buchanan, "if you send us a missionary, send us one who has learned your Ten Commandments."  
 Must have had a powerful effect on Israel.  
 Egyptian temples filled with vermin worshipped as gods.  
 Fresh from this, received law.

Its perfection from two points of view :

(1.) *In its order and arrangement.*

*Ten*, denoting the complete, perfect being.  
 Ten plagues on Egypt, a complete round of judgments.  
 So transgressions of Israel in wilderness. Numb. xiv. 22.  
 So consecration of tenths.  
 Hence decalogue includes all that should, and should not be done in reference to God and man.  
 Written on two tables ; we say four on one, six on the other.  
 But Josephus and Philo say five on each side.  
 Evidently correct from consideration of nature of the fifth commandment.  
 Parents representatives of God ; hence 1 Tim. v. 4.  
 Parents as God, though in lower sense, authors of our being.  
 Then, too, the phrase, "the Lord thy God" inserted in it.  
 Hence see beauty of arrangement : Give God honour in His  
 (1) being, (2) worship, (3) name, (4) day, (5) representatives.  
 So second table, but now glance at relative position of the two.  
 First religion, then morality.  
 Pagan morality debased, from false conceptions of God.  
 Only by being true to Head of human family, can we be true to its members.

(2.) *As a summary of duty.*

Some assert decalogue refers merely to outward conduct.  
 But if so why charge to Joshua i. 8, and Ps. cxix. 18.  
 These imply latent depth and spirituality of meaning in it.  
 Negative form of its precepts led to this view.  
 But this rather testifies to its deep spiritual import.  
 Love recognised by it as root of obedience.  
 Not shallow love, but regulating thought, word, and deed.  
 Seen in arrangement of second table.

Not injure (1) in *deed* as regards (a) his life, (b) his dearest property, (c) his property generally ; (2) in *word*, ninth commandment ; and (3) in *thought*, tenth commandment.

Thus see its comprehensiveness. Comp. Matt. v. 22, 28.

The same comprehensiveness seen in first table.

The heart, the alpha and omega of the decalogue.

## II. THE PERMANENCE OF THE DECALOGUE.

Written on tables of stone,

Yet some assert intended only for Israel in Canaan.

Lay stress on reference to "Land of Egypt," &c.

But New Test. precepts also contain reference to local circumstances.

God never gives abstract delineations of duty.

Revelation entwined with characters and events of history.

Permanence of decalogue stamped on very face of it.

But is it not abrogated by the Gospel ? But Matt. v. 17—19.

Law written on fleshy tables of heart.

Believer not under law as a yoke. Comp. 1 Tim. i. 9.

Walking in newness of life, sets seal to law as "holy, just, and good." Is it so with you ?

Avoid Antinomian licentiousness.

The law and the Spirit have same end in view, and same path to reach it.

Our lives must be framed on principles of decalogue..

Bring ourselves to be judged by its standard.

## SPIRITUAL RETIREMENT.

"And He said unto them, come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while ; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."—Mark vi. 31.

Spoken by Christ to two classes of persons.

(1) To His own disciples returning elated at their success.

(2) To the disciples of John the Baptist mourning over his death.

Christ saw that the same regimen was needful for both.

The invitation addressed to us also.

**I. THE SEASONS OF SPIRITUAL RETIREMENT.**

We need retirement for serious reflection.  
God has ordained seasons of retirement—these are

**(1.) Voluntary Seasons.**

Believers must seek opportunities of retirement.  
We have the example of Christ. Mark i. 35.  
The morning is the first fruits of the day. Exod. xxiii. 19.  
We need not be restricted to this.  
Isaac meditated at eventide. Gen xxiv. 63.  
But we need to set apart some portion of each day.

**(2.) Accidental, or providential seasons.**

God often enforces retirement by sickness.  
Mercifully disengages the busy worldling from his business.  
In effect says "thou art cumbered about much serving,"  
come apart, and rest awhile.  
It may seem accidental, but really a Father's discipline.  
Happy they who profit by such a season.  
Alas! some fail in this respect.  
Prove themselves impervious to the Divine teaching. Luke  
xiii. 7.

**(3.) A natural season.**

This is the rest of the Lord's day.  
A divinely-appointed institution. Deut. v. 12—14.  
Woe be to those who dare to set it aside.  
Its desecration attended by disaster even in this world.  
On this day Jesus says to us "Come apart and rest awhile."  
Alas! that this invitation should be so frequently slighted.  
Such persons publish their own condemnation.

**II. THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL RETIREMENT.**

Not simply a withdrawal from the presence of others.  
This invitation no warrant for monkish seclusion.  
Contrast purpose of Christ's seclusion, with that of Rome.  
The latter a cowardly forsaking the path of duty.  
Even Elijah rebuked for this—"What doest thou here,  
Elijah?"  
Such solitude does not develop the graces of Christian  
character.

"For solitude, however some may rave,  
Seeming a sanctuary, proves a grave ;  
A sepulchre in which the living lie,  
Where all good qualities grow sick and die."

Christ's retirement only a temporary one.  
To be solaced by His sympathy, to profit by His instructions, and to learn His truth.  
The Baptist's disciples needed sympathy and counsel.  
His own disciples needed to be calmed down, &c.  
Thus Jesus takes his people apart to teach them.  
So He dealt with Saul of Tarsus—"behold he prayeth."  
Good for us thus to turn aside.

### III. THE PURPOSES OF SPIRITUAL RETIREMENT.

#### (1.) *Needful for bodily health. Text, (ult.)*

Human frame needs rest.  
Christ is a considerate Master.  
This the purpose of the institution of the Sabbath.  
This, however, not as some assert, its whole and sole design.  
Change of occupation contributes to recruit the body.  
Rest of Lord's day designed for us, as spiritual and immortal beings.  
To divert thoughts into fresh channel, and purify them.  
Sabbath-breaker fails to find refreshment even for the body.  
Conscience condemns him, makes him irritable.  
If you want to secure refreshment for body, turn aside with Jesus.

#### (2.) *Needful for spiritual health.*

Thus acquire acquaintance with Jesus and conformity to Him.  
In retirement we hear His still small voice.  
"Keep selves in love of God"—"Abide in My love." How but thus ?  
Hos. ii. 14. Here leads people as of old to Sinai.  
As in still summer's night, dew falls and plants grow, so in closet, influences of Spirit descend.  
Cultivate acquaintance with Jesus.  
Necessary for heart naturally as the exchange, must be converted into temple.  
Thus qualify for holy duties, &c.

A test of your spiritual condition, not fear to trust self with Jesus.

Yes, one day we must be alone with Him, on death-bed.  
May you be able to say :

"Alone with Jesus ! leave me here,  
Without a wish, without a fear ;  
My pulse is weak, and faint my breath.  
But is He not the Lord of death ?  
And if I live, or if I die,  
'Tis all the same when He is nigh.

Alone with Jesus ! how secure.  
Vile in myself, in Him how pure,  
The tempest howls, the waters beat,  
They harm me not in my retreat.  
Night deepens—'mid its gloom and chill,  
He draws me nearer to Him still."

### THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY.

"The perfect law of liberty."—James i. 26.

Contrast between St. James and St. Paul.

Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, James, Bishop of Jerusalem.

James employs Jewish phraseology.

Thus ch. ii. 2, "synagogue," v. 19. "one God," v. 12, "swear not," &c., v. 14 "anoint with oil," and here calls gospel *text*.

*Text* not contrast between law and gospel.

No intention of disparaging law.

His object to correct false interpretations of both.

Hence corrects false view of faith and of justification.

Places law on footing of the sermon on the mount.

Law and gospel from same source, and blend together, so that James and Paul not at variance.

Paul says "law holy," while both admit its imperfection.

Requires grace for "its" fulfilment, supplied by gospel.

### I. IT IS A LAW.

Christians not to be divested of restraint.

This would be a misfortune, make them "outlaws"—Ishmaels.

Made "Sons of God," but "son" suggests obedience, &c.

Thus under law, Rom. viii 2. Define law.  
 We in subjection to Christ.  
 His word has all the authority of law.  
 Imposed by King of Kings.  
 Proclaimed openly. "Preach the gospel to every creature."  
 Equitable, fulfils Burke's definition, "beneficence acting by rule."  
 Beneficial both in aim and in results.  
 Thus "under law to Christ." Gal. vi. 16.  
 An authoritative standard. Is. viii. 20.  
 Mankind judged by it. Rom. ii. 16.

## II. IT IS A PERFECT LAW.

Harsh laws a source of misery.  
 Law then becomes tyranny.  
 Laws have been written in blood, even in England.  
 Something defective in all human law.  
 But not so gospel, emanation of Divine mind.  
 Pure and free from error.  
 Ps. cxix. 140, as a friend, counsellor, benefactor.  
 A completeness about it, legislating for complex beings  
 Prescribes for body, 1 Cor. vi. 20, ix. 27, &c.  
 Expands intellect.  
 Satisfies spiritual nature, enthroning conscience.  
 Exercises regenerating influence on soul.  
 Elevates man in scale of being.  
 Provides all that is needed, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

## III. IT IS A LAW OF LIBERTY.

Something restrictive and coercive about law.  
 Incompatible with liberty, absolutely considered.  
 Terrors of Sinai in keeping with tenor of moral law.  
 Its attendants—stripes—dungeon—scaffold.  
 But terrible only to opposers.  
 1 Tim. i. 8, *i.e.*, when enters into appreciation of spirit, &c.  
 But law in itself cannot do this, punishment does not reform.  
 The gospel opens eyes, creates love for true and good.  
 John viii. 31, 32, Truth enlightens reason, enfranchises will,  
 ennobles affections, leaves no healthy wish ungratified.  
 Delivers from power of sin which enslaves.



Points to Christ.

Old servile spirit removed, become a son in Father's house.

Ps. cxix. 32. Heart expands, obedience becomes joyous.

Believer sensible of genial influence, free from yoke of oppressing fears, and tyranny of commanding lusts.

Into this "look" as angels. 1 Pet. i. 12.

Make selves acquainted, changed into image.

Thus stewards of Him who giveth liberally.

Divested of servile spirit, appreciate Divine ordinances.

## THE UNITY OF JEHOVAH.

"Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord."—Deut. vi. 4.

A precept constantly enforced by Moses.

He ever reminds Israel of the honour conferred on them.

Therefore disgraceful for them to entertain false conceptions of God.

Purity of worship depends on conception of Being worshipped.

Hence heathen "do things not convenient."

From this state, Israel raised by Divine revelation.

The foundation of their faith, the unity of Jehovah.

These words express;

## I. THE SUPREMACY OF THE LORD.

Custom of heathen to select a tutelary deity.

But not so in Israel.

Literally "Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah, or the one Being."

Notice employment of these two names in Scripture.\*

Generally Elohim, is the Creator, preserver, &c., and plural for to indicate possession of fulness of power.

Jehovah expresses covenant relationship.

Jehovah a modification of Hebrew verb "to be," compare Exod. iii. 14.

His supremacy asserted here: "The Lord our God is the one Being."

\* Havernick's introduction to the Pentateuch, p. 57.

We know nothing of what God is in Himself.  
 We can only study His own declarations in Scripture.  
 The Alpha and Omega, &c.  
 His wisdom is omniscient.  
 His power is omnipotent.  
 His love the constant theme of Scripture.  
 This last attribute wonderfully exhibited. John iii. 16.  
 Here see His supremacy, a Being unrivalled in single-mindedness of His love.  
 His unity set forth in expression. "God is love."  
 Now as God is one so must we be one. Ps. lxxiii. 25.  
 See v. 5.  
 The fall caused our affections to be swayed hither and thither.  
 God's demand of our undivided love highly reasonable.  
 Invests us with simplicity of character, which is the basis of true dignity. Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

## II. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE LORD.

Ignorance of God led heathen to multiply idols.  
 Yet thoughtful men dissatisfied, hence scepticism prevalent.  
 Fabrication of idols designed to convey to ignorant, idea of omnipresence of Deity.  
 They knew that Jupiter, Neptune, &c., were really names for powers of nature.  
 They have left evidences of their conviction that God is one.  
 History is repeating itself in the movement of Baboo Chunder Sen.  
 But still the worship of a Supreme Being not Christianity.  
 The Bible tells of the relationship He has assumed.  
 To reject its testimony is to offer Him a dishonouring worship.  
 The Socinian and Hindoo reject Christ as "Jehovah our righteousness."  
 Accept only part of Divine revelation as Samaritans to whom Christ said John iv. 22.  
 To worship God acceptably we must recognize His fatherly character in Christ. *Text.*

The name Elohim applied to God both by Jews and heathen.

Compare Deut. iv. 28, 29, where Elohim used.

But Israel's Elohim always distinguished by "our" or "thy," and by Jehovah added.

As Elohim the God of nature, so Jehovah the God of revelation.

Read Exod. vi. 2—7. Comp. Jer. xvii. 1.

Full signification of name to be learnt in deliverance from Egyptian bondage.

Then the old name (comp. Gen. iv. 1) would rise once more into life and significance.

Then the great "I am" was to prove their covenant God.

Then to be a Father to Israel. Hos. xi. 1.

Covenant established in sacrifice on Calvary.

In Christ, the God of nature becomes the God of grace.

"This God our God for ever and ever."

### III. THE COMMAND OF THE LORD.

When God speaks man bound to listen and obey.

As Christ, "he that ears to hear," &c., so *text*.

Obedience to it ensures three blessings.

(1.) It will check our presumption.

Just views of God will banish proud thoughts.

Had Israel obeyed, they would not have needed, Matt. iii. 9.

Our salvation depends on God. Rom. ix. 16.

(2.) It will stimulate our faith.

"Can anything be too hard for the Lord?"

Our God no dumb idol, but we can say, "We praise Thee, O God, &c.

(3.) It will promote our holiness.

Keep object before us, "Be ye holy even as I am holy."

Though sinners, we shall learn secret of true power by obeying *text*.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a letter or a page from a manuscript. The text is written in dark ink on aged paper and is arranged in several lines, though some are obscured by the binding or the angle of the page. The script is fluid and characteristic of the 17th or 18th century.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, continuing from the previous section. The text is written in dark ink on aged paper and is arranged in several lines, though some are obscured by the binding or the angle of the page. The script is fluid and characteristic of the 17th or 18th century.

# SEVERITY AND GOODNESS OF GOD.

God endures under the heaviest stroke.  
I can only be answered by a soul exposed to it.  
light of God's truth withdrawn, to have a hardening,  
and a seared conscience, how terrible!  
is the fate of those who sin against light and knowledge.  
leges abused draw down punishment. Amos. iii. 2.  
relationship makes them feel first effects of His wrath.  
Pet. iv. 17.  
goodness of heart a sure precursor of destruction.  
may we have grace to avoid beginnings of evil.

## GOD'S GOODNESS.

Displayed towards us as sinners.  
The unchurched of the Jews proved the reconciling of the world.  
Barriers broken down which separated us from God.  
Riches of God's goodness extended with an unstinting hand.  
The righteousness of Christ made over to us.  
God has fully revealed Himself to us in His Word.  
Well may we rejoice in our privileges.  
This goodness endures as long as we "continue in it."  
God does not treat man as a helpless, irrational creature.  
Grace animates to increased exertion. Titus ii. 12.  
Security depends on continuance of our fidelity. 1 Cor.  
xv. 2; Heb. iii. 6, 14.  
Yet this continuance a result of Divine grace imparted.  
Reliance on self gives Satan an advantage.  
We must not presume upon, but continue in God's goodness.  
A fearful alternative suggested. "Otherwise the  
also, &c." alternative suggested.  
Cut off from the body of the Church.  
It may be, cut off from the life that is now is. Luke xiii. 7.  
Certainly cut off from the life that is to come.  
Contemplate this as possibly your sad fate.  
Church of Israel not the only one which has felt God's severity.  
Church of Rome in similar state of condemnation.  
Her shipwreck warns us not to tamper with God's truth.  
Church of England may well look to itself.

## THE SEVERITY AND GOODNESS OF GOD.

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."—Rom. xi. 22.

Here Paul treats of practical bearing of doctrine of election. Jews rejected by God through unbelief, though chap. ix. 4, 5. With a sorrowful heart he predicts consequences.

Prophecy of Christ about to be fulfilled. Matt. xxi. 43.

Cannot be charged as a wrong on God, for ch. ix. 18.

But a Jew might ask, "where is His truth and faithfulness?"

The Apostle anticipates this objection by showing :

(1.) That a remnant will be saved. v. 4.

(2.) That a restoration will be secured. v. 15.

In short, shows mercy rejoicing against judgment.

Thus teaches us to respect the Jews. Hos. iii. 4 ;

Numb. xxiv. 9 (*ult.*)

And teaches us not to rest in, or abuse our privileges.

If God dealt so severely with His first love, let us beware.

*Text.*

## I. GOD'S SEVERITY.

Severity a harsh word when applied to God.

Only passage where it is so applied—its derivation.

The word here applied to the unchurching of the Jews.

"Them which fell" implies the righteousness of this act.

God deals mercifully with His erring creatures.

But there were no extenuating features in Israel's fall.

They despised His promises, and disobeyed His prophets.

Deut. ix. 24.

They rejected and crucified His Son.

Mercy could no longer stay the arm of insulted justice.

We learn that spiritual judgments are the severest of all.

Heb. x. 31, true under any circumstances.

When judgment falls on the body, it exhausts itself.\*

The weakness of the object causes it to elude the violence of the stroke.

\* South's Sermons. Serm. XLV., Vol. I., p. 386. Tegg's Edition.

But the soul endures under the heaviest stroke.

Ps. xc. 11 can only be answered by a soul exposed to it.

To have light of God's truth withdrawn, to have a hardened heart, and a seared conscience, how terrible !

Yet this the fate of those who sin against light and knowledge.

Privileges abused draw down punishment. Amos. iii. 2.

Their relationship makes them feel first effects of His wrath.

1 Pet. iv. 17.

Blindness of heart a sure precursor of destruction.

May we have grace to avoid beginnings of evil.

## II. GOD'S GOODNESS.

Displayed towards us as sinners.

The unchurching of the Jews proved the reconciling of the world. Acts xiii. 46.

Barriers broken down which separated us from God.

Riches of God's goodness extended with an unstinting hand.

The righteousness of Christ made over to us.

God has fully revealed Himself to us in His Word.

Well may we rejoice in our privileges.

This goodness endures as long as we "continue in it."

God does not treat man as a helpless, irrational creature.

Grace animates to increased exertion. Titus ii. 12.

Security depends on continuance of our fidelity. 1 Cor. xv. 2 ; Heb. iii. 6, 14.

Yet this continuance a result of Divine grace imparted.

Reliance on self gives Satan an advantage.

We must not presume upon, but continue in God's goodness.

A fearful alternative suggested. "Otherwise thou also, &c."

Cut off from the body of the Church.

It may be, cut off from the life that now is. Luke xiii. 7.

Certainly cut off from the life that is to come.

Contemplate this as possibly your sad fate.

Church of Israel not the only one which has felt God's severity.

Church of Rome in similar state of condemnation.

Her shipwreck warns us not to tamper with God's truth.

Church of England may well look to itself.

Romanism and Rationalism may well cause removal of her candlestick.

Matter for inquiry with us as individuals.

God's goodness calls for fear as well as love. Hos. iii. 5.

Ps. cxxx. 4.

For God has curses in store as well as blessings.

Address sinners.

Address believers.

### THE ASCENSION.

"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God."—Mark xvi. 19.

The ascension the crowning incident in Christ's career.

All these incidents are historical facts.

Each has been assailed by sceptics, especially his ascension.

Their arguments as to its impossibility not worth answering.

But we must answer argument, from silence of two evangelists.

Notice fragmentary character of the gospels. John xxi. 25.

To make complete record, they must be grouped together.

Independent witnesses who describe facts as impressed upon their observation.

Each evangelist, too, has a prominent design which regulates his selection of incidents for description.

Still this does not satisfactorily account for silence of Matthew and John.

Yet unreasonable to argue from this, their ignorance of it.

Such a theory tenable only from total absence of any reference to it.

As acquaintances of the risen Jesus, must have believed in His ascension.

The ascension, the necessary adjunct of the resurrection.

References in St. Matthew xxviii. 18, xxvi. 64.

References in St. John xx. 17, vi. 62.

Indirect confirmation of Luke's detailed account and this brief record of St. Mark.

Consider Christ's ascension.\*

\* Vide Lange *in loco*.



## I. AS A RETURN HOME.

History of Christ on earth full of mystery and difficulty.

As God He must be omnipresent. John iii. 13.

Yet as God's servant He left heaven for a time.

Earth the place of His exile till Father's purposes accomplished.

Into these He threw Himself as "His meat and drink," so finding pleasure.

Yet must have felt privation—hence His hours of retirement.

By these exercises the tedium of His exile was relieved.

True He was always conscious of His Father's presence, but with restrictions.

Therefore Luke xii. 50. May mean simply a desire for painful ordeal to be quickly over.

But also language of One who knows that this fiery baptism is the only means by which His soaring spirit can be released.

Till then "straitened"—longs for return home.

"Home," the magnet which attracts the true children.

If Absalom in Geshur longs for it, if prodigal longs for it, *à fortiori* the Son.

He knows no cold reception awaits Him. Ps. xxiv. 9.

## II. AS AN EXALTATION.

Again revert to difficulty presented by Christ's deity, connected with His exaltation.

As God He could receive no addition to His prerogatives, &c.

As Mediator it is that He is exalted.

His sojourn on earth was a state of degradation.

No language could adequately describe extent of it.

Love drew Him down to undergird our frail humanity.

Then He showed what mere "dust and ashes" is capable of.

He had been exalted in His baptism—in the wilderness—before His enemies—by His miracles—even on His cross—above all in His resurrection.

But a higher honour reserved, as resurrection made Him a king *de jure*, so ascension, a king *de facto*.

"All power given to me," &c., as the Son of Man.

This indeed worthy of admiration, "the worm" of Ps. xxii. 6 elevated to loftiest throne.

Phil. ii. 9—11. "Names at which the world grew pale."  
 But this "name" a source of blessing.  
 Evidence of grandeur of His exaltation in Rev. v. 11—13.

### III. AS A NEVER-ENDING MARCH OF TRIUMPH.

The ascension, the link connecting Christ's work on earth,  
 with His reign in heaven.

Not seated there in idle state ; carries on government .

As on earth unwearied in labours, so in heaven.

If on earth He wrought so much good, *à fortiori* in heaven.

John xii. 32. Magnetic attraction of ascended Jesus at  
 work.

The ascension the signal for commencement of the Church's  
 successful warfare.

Refer again to Matt. xxviii. 18, and connect v. 19.

In carrying out this commission, power of ascended Redeemer  
 seen.

Preaching may be "foolishness," but wisdom justified in  
 using its means.

Causes ever fresh peals of joy in heaven.

Thus the war is being waged with varying success, but Acts  
 ii. 47.

Prophecy points to glorious future, Eph. i. 22, 23, Rev. xxi. 2.

Pleasant to meditate on Redeemer's exaltation.

The King will subdue every foe.

Under His sceptre you are sure of safety.

See in Him the dispenser of God's mercy, the administrator  
 of God's favour, and the very embodiment of God's love.

### THE REWARD OF THE REDEEMER'S OBEDIENCE.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name  
 which is above every name."—Phil. ii. 9.

An exhortation to humility from example of Christ, vs. 6—8.

Bound to practise it, in imitation of Him who is our Master.

But a further reason, it is a virtue which ensures its own  
 reward.

In Christ we have an example of the value of that reward.

But it may be said, His is an exceptional case.

If so, the Apostles' words have no meaning—and between us and Christ a great gulf fixed.  
 But He rose as *man* as well as God.  
 We have a personal interest in Him as the Son of Man.  
 His manhood receives reward of His humiliation. *Text.*

# I. HIS EXALTATION IN RELATION TO, AND CONTRAST WITH, HIS PREVIOUS HUMILIATION.

Needs no argument to prove how low He descended.  
 Ps. xxii. 6.

Yet even then honours heaped upon Him.  
 At His baptism and transfiguration—His miraculous power.  
 Even at His death exalted in signs and wonders.  
 Much more on the resurrection morn. Rom. i. 4.  
 But fitting His exaltation should not cease here, but advance in relation to previous humiliation.

## (1.) A relation of natural consequence.

"Natural" inasmuch as it is a law of nature.  
 The oak was once an acorn—great Cæsar was once an infant.  
 God's dealings in grace analogous to those in nature, hence the Christian proverb "No cross, no crown."  
 Hence Scripture inseparably connects His humiliation and exaltation. 1 Pet. i. 2 (ult.).  
 His humiliation rendered necessary by nature of his undertaking.  
 When completed, law of natural sequence necessitated His exaltation. *Text.*

But we go further and say it expresses—

## (2.) A relation of merit and desert.

Some Protestants shrink from admitting this, since it seems to sanction Romish doctrine of merits of saints.  
 But distinction between obedience of Christ, and that of saints, not one of degree, but of kind.  
 His obedience perfect—flaws in every saint.  
 But He had a higher title to reward, from being God, who for a limited period had laid aside His glory.  
 Now resumes what originally belonged to Him. John xvii. 5.  
 He had been exalted in His mighty works.  
 Yet their inference evaded (Luke xi. 15), His disciples in doubt.

Therefore He prayed for an immeasurably greater glory than this.

He claims the glory of absolute Deity.

This needful for our faith to rest on an immovable foundation.

He might have continued on earth after His resurrection, but with what result ?

His glory would have ceased to dazzle us—we should fail to recognize His Deity.

He would seem an exile, who had failed to perform what He had undertaken.

Where then, too, would have been the elevating hope which animates believers ?

No, we must lay hold of statement of *Text*.

## II. IN WHAT THAT EXALTATION CONSISTS.

What name ? Some refer it to "Son of God." Acts xiii. 33.

But this name conferred subsequent to His resurrection.

Others refer it to glory won for Himself as head of Church.

But though true, we keep to name "Jesus."

It was no random appellation. Matt. i. 21.

But objection—was it not conferred long before His ascension ?

Yes, but that name of no value while He was on earth.

It was a name common in Jewish households.

It was a name that was fixed in scorn on the cross.

But ascension proves what that name capable of. Heb. vii. 25.

Hence to the persecuting Saul it is said "I am Jesus."

There are illustrious names of warriors, poets, philosophers, &c.

But this name towers high above them all.

The name by means of which alone God can be comprehended by man.

The name on which dying saints rest with confidence.

"As shipwrecked sailors clasp a plank and launch

Upon the billows of a midnight sea,

Those fearless souls, embracing Jesus, plunge

Into eternity.

Then safely floated to the house of peace

Where the bright plum'd angels throng the shore.

Still, still the name of Jesus those glad hosts

In anthems pour."

The name written on foreheads of elect, so that they cry

Rom. viii. 33.

The name of Jesus ? What do we now owe to it ?

"O name above all names the most beloved,  
 Full of memories and of untold peace,  
 Earnest of all unutterable joys !  
 Yet fond heart cease,  
 For Jesus is the name of the high God ;  
 Hushed be thy thoughts and silently adore,  
 When thou shalt come to see Him as He is,  
 Thou shalt know more."

What is the nature of the worship you offer that name ?  
 Is it merely that of bowing the head when it is uttered ?

### THE HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION OF CHRIST.

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things."—Eph. iv. 10.

Bible suited to varying temperaments of human nature.  
 Christ identified self with chequered experience of human life.

Christianity has its humiliations and glories, its mournings and hosannahs.

Presents picture drawn by master hand, light and shade duly attempered.

In Christ's humiliation nothing mean, for connected with supernatural incidents.

*E.g., Contrast :*

Birth in stable, with adoration of Magi and shepherds.

Human ignorance in seeking fruit on fig tree, with power in withering it.

Seizure by mob, with hurling to ground, and healing Malchus

Cross, with attendant signs.

Grave, with His resurrection and ascension.

The ascension, crowning glory of life of Christ.

Calls for faith to receive it.

As "some doubted" His resurrection, so here some assert "cloud" rests on departure from world.

But evidence of angels, Stephen, St. Paul.

Potent faith will dispel all clouds, believe *text*.

These words set forth :

**I. HIS HUMILIATION.**

Not dwell on this at length.

Connect last clause of v. 9.

Its general meaning.

Whether refer to conception, as Ps. cxxxix. 15, or to grave, as Matt. xvi. 40, it testifies to humiliation.

Necessary part of Apostle's argument, quotes Ps. lxxviii. 5.

Here difficulty, how *ascend* when God over all ? "

"Ascend" is a correlative term.

And as exaltation proportionate to humiliation, therefore "above all heavens" contrasted with comparative "lower parts of earth."

Whatever degradation fall brought, Christ participated in. His mother carpenter's wife, born in stable.\*

Childhood under law, as man toiled at carpenter's bench.

Lower animals better off ; "foxes have holes."

Persecution followed him to felon's death.

His grave a borrowed one.

**II. HIS EXALTATION.**

*Text* not predicated of Godhead.

His divine attributes intact while in flesh, as John iii. 13.

Here human nature, emphasis on "same."

Manhood now etherealized, yet identical.

That Jesus

"Who laid His great dominion by  
On a poor virgin's breast to lie."

Who grew in knowledge, felt weariness, wept, &c., is He who has ascended.

God not only "manifest in flesh," but *continuing* in it.

Talk not of physical difficulties, law of gravity.

Let cavillers explain his miraculous power.

He is God, who retains humanity for our comfort.

For by this we know that :

- (1.) His heart still sympathizes.
- (2.) High Priest as considerate now as on earth.
- (3.) Hope of glory on immutable basis, for ascended as first-fruits.†

\* Eadie's Commentary on Ephesians, *in loco*.

† Pearson on the Creed.

(4.) Fitting Judge.

Whither has He ascended? *Text.*

St. Paul's use of superlative expressions.

Here figurative, "above all heavens," not in locality, but in dignity.

So 1 Kings viii. 27 ; Ps. lxxviii. 33 ; also 2 Cor. xii. 2.

Quote Pearson, "Whatever heaven higher," &c.

In spiritual creation no dull uniformity, "thrones, dominions, &c.," but above all Christ Lord paramount.

None superior or equal, no name so high, no renown so matchless.

### III. PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE IS EXALTED THUS.

Not ascended as isolated unit.

More glorious assertion, *text* connect with chap. i. 23.

Church the filled-up receptacle into which Christ pours graces of spirit.

Evidently refers to this here, for v. 11.

True he fills, { with omnipresence of His Deity.  
                          { in respect of rule as Mediator King.

But here manifestation of presence by Spirit, so that each believer say, John i. 16.

"Nature abhors a vacuum" spiritually true.

First Adam brought sense of emptiness.

Taken away by second Adam.

Fills Church with spiritual benefactions.

Fills people with fruits of righteousness, &c.

Are we rising on "wings of meditation?"

Ours an ascending path on which not fail through emptiness.

With Christ must also descend.

A cross for each.

O, thou ascended Redeemer, fill aching void.

"Then shall we see Thee as Thou art,  
For ever fixed in no unfruitful gaze,  
But such as lifts the new created heart  
Age after age in worthier love and praise."

## THE CHARGE TO JOSHUA.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."—Joshua i. 8.

This book opens new epoch.

Moses dead, and new leader appears on scene.

Joshua no inexperienced novice.

Moses saw he possessed requisite qualities.

First appears in battle against Amalek.

As confidential servant, ascends with Moses part of the way up Sinai.

One of twelve spies.

Solemnly invested with authority. Numb. xxvii. 18, &c.

Now God says v. 2, and charges him, saying *text*.

Vast importance of God's word.

## I. SUBJECT FOR HIS OWN PRIVATE MEDITATION.

Importance of *written* revelation.

Not left to treacherous guidance of tradition.

Book to be studied by people. Deut. vi. 6, 9.

Portions of law always before people—chained Bible in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Book to be studied by ruler. Deut. xvii. 18, 19.

These injunctions here enforced by God Himself.

"Not depart," &c.

Its fundamental principles to underlie all His orders.

Influence of King James' Bible on purity of English language.

A charm about it which even worldly persons confess.

Our familiarity with it increases influence, "speak as oracle of God."

Charm of Mr. Bright's oratory lies partially in familiarity with Scripture.

This Joshua to cultivate.

"A man under authority," therefore must make no mistake.

Applies to us who are ministers of the Word.

"Thou shalt meditate therein," &c.

Joshua a man of action, little time for meditation.

Lesson needed in this busy age.

Strain upon physical and mental faculties severe.

Soul lost sight of, Bible set aside.

But fatal mistake, become mere brute beasts.



Hearts prove discordant instruments.  
 Bible silent, and menacing witness against them.  
 Think of charge to Joshua.

## II. THE RULE BY WHICH HIS CONDUCT WAS TO BE DIRECTED.

The book of the law contained a code of instructions.  
 Rules in waging war on Canaanites.  
 Prescriptions against imitating idolatrous practices.  
 Directions as to dividing the land.  
 All these to be faithfully adhered to.  
 "A man under authority," also to set example to people.  
 So we must "observe to do."  
 Knowledge not seconded by obedience aggravates guilt.  
 "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."  
 James i. 22. This self-deceit cautioned against in *text*.  
 In all law, general principles capable of extended application.  
 Ought to be able to do this, but corrupt nature prevents.  
 Conscience perverted as a rule, a witness, and a judge.  
 Assent to Scripture of no avail, if disobeying it.  
 Ask God to give Holy Spirit.

## III. THE REWARD PROMISED ON OBEDIENCE.

Success desired by all.  
 Yet many whose lives are failures.  
 As a rule we can trace cause to their own folly.  
 One neglects opportunities, another idle, another a drunkard.  
 The blight which darkens some men's prospects of their  
 own creation.  
 God tells you so in fact, *text*.  
 Infatuated policy which discards Bible.  
 Adherence to its rules brings success, though apparently  
 detrimental in isolated cases.  
 Secure for you all that a well-regulated mind desire, so that  
 say Ps. xvi. 6.  
 Prayerful study transform you into image of Him who said,  
 "Not My will, but Thine be done."  
 "Thy way, not mine, O Lord,  
 However dark it be ;  
 O lead me by Thine own right hand,  
 Choose out the path for me.  
 Smooth let it be or rough,  
 It will be still the best ;  
 Winding or straight it matters not,  
 It leads me to Thy rest."  
 Make the Word your daily companion and guide.

## THE BURIAL OF MOSES.

"So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."—Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6.

Moses a man of marvellous gifts.

A grandeur about his whole career.

Witness his generosity, meekness, love, fidelity, courage.

But greater, when viewed on the mount with Jehovah.

His relationship to Christ. Deut. xviii. 15.

His death in keeping with his life.

Combination of humiliation and glory, like that of Christ.

## I. THE HUMILIATION OF HIS DEATH. v. 5.

Death natural termination of life, therefore not to be viewed with repugnance.

But picture useful and honoured life forfeited for one rash act, with prize full in view.

So Moses. Numbers xx. 12. Hopeless to appeal against sentence.

Deeply affecting.

The law-giver furnishes illustration of James ii. 10.

Righteousness of God vindicated in his fate.

Yet death of a true man, one consumed with zeal and faithfulness.

Well point to tragical fate of antitype.

## (1.) He died prematurely. v. 7.

But it may be said, look at his age.

But compare Amram, Kohath, Levi. Exod. vi. 20, 18, 16.

Might have looked forward to years of usefulness.

## (2.) He died in exile.

Canaan the goal of his hopes.

Often pondered on picture he was empowered to draw.

Hence Deut. iii. 23—25.

But no, must lay bones in heathen soil.

Died under Jehovah's frown as Christ did.

## II. THE GLORY OF HIS DEATH.

No reluctance, death no terrors.

Tradition describes it.\*

"Died by a kiss from Lord." "Servant of God, well done."

Death not premature—rounded fulness in his life.

Had delivered Israel—had consolidated national polity.

How often we indulge in regrets over youthful genius cut off.

"For can I doubt who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—  
I doubt not what thou would'st have been,  
A life in civic action warm ;  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm."†

But why complain thus, as if no better life.

No true life a failure, for Christ takes honour of people into  
His own keeping.

Christ died at thirty-three, yet say John xvii. 4.

Moses knew He would now only be a clog on national progress.

Christ says : "It is expedient for you that I go away."

If died in exile, saw desire of heart fulfilled.

From top of Pisgah, marked prominent landmarks.

Saw in anticipation tribes entering on possession. Luke ii. 29.

Example of gifted men who live for futurity, point duller  
men to promised land.

So the Master : "He shall see of the travail of His soul."

But crowning honour, v. 6.

Distinguished men buried with pomp.

"Yes, had he not high honour,  
The hill-side for his pall,  
To lie in state while angels wait,  
With stars for tapers tall.  
And the dark rock pines, like tossing plumes,  
Over his bier to wave.  
And God's own hand, in that lonely land,  
To lay him in his grave."

All trace of grave obliterated. *Text.*

Wise precaution. Tendency to venerate relics.

Disgraceful scenes in so-called "holy places" of Palestine.

*Text* a protest against tendency to hallow particular locality.

\* *Vide* Smith's Dictionary of Bible, vol. II. p. 432.

† Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

Locality of Christ's tomb rendered uncertain.

Not seek living among dead. John iv. 21.

But further lesson. Mount of Transfiguration.

Moses like Enoch and Elijah.

Why corpse buried, but body saw no corruption?\*

Points to his typical character as Ps. xvi. 10.

Like disobedient Israelites he died, but not "carcase perished." Heb. iii. 17.

Moses' prayer answered on Tabor.

Confirmed by Jude 9.

Michael leader of angelic powers, guardian of Israel.

To him burial of Moses entrusted.

Devil opposes as lord of "power of death."

Claims body as that of sinner who failed in execution of mediatorial office.†

To Satan important that consequences of death should follow, that so covenant made void.

But Michael says, "the Lord rebuke thee."

Thus marks important epoch in plan of salvation.

Midway between Adam and Christ.

Moses as mediator imperfect. Heb. vii. 19.

Type even in death of "firstfruits of them that slept."

Course of death interrupted.

Hovering between corruption and renovation.

On Mount of Transfiguration, emerged from gloom of Hades.

"He being dead yet speaketh."

### THE OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH.

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—John xiv. 25, 26.

Some of Christ's last words.

Melancholy, yet hopeful and confident.

His concern now for His disciples.

Incapable of understanding His sayings, "offended."

To leave them thus would be to undo work.

\* Kurtz's History of Old Covenant. vol. iii. 495.

† Kurtz, p. 500.

His words would fail to exert influence, only legacy, a vague tradition.

Therefore another agent needed. *Text.*

## I. THE SON SPEAKING HIS WORD. v. 25.

Christ the word. John i. 14. Rev. xix. 13.

Obvious reason, medium of communication.

Words reveal thoughts.

Means which Christ employed, parables, &c.

"All bare witness"—"Never man spake like this man."

"Speaking words" important part of Christ's mission.

The living word still embodied in pages of Scripture.

Christ's own testimony to character of word.

(1.) A quickening word. John vi. 63.

Literally understood, of no profit.

(2.) A sanctifying word. John xv. 3.

(3.) A saving word. John v. 24.

"Incorruptible seed," assimilating to incarnate Word.

This spoken, as seed lying dormant.

The disciples to receive, that they might preach to others.

But another Agent needed to develope and expand.

## II. THE FATHER SENDING HIS SPIRIT.

Announces now as Holy Ghost.

The Father would send as He had sent Son.

Christ came in Father's name, as Representative. Ch. xiv. 9.

So Holy Ghost in Christ's name.

Instead of teacher who had spoken words, another.

Hence Rom. viii. 9.

Acts of Trinity predicated indifferently of each.

No schism in that glorious body.

## III. SPIRIT EXERCISING TWO-FOLD OFFICE OF: (1) A Teacher.

"Lo I am with you always" as a teacher.

Preaching "foolishness," but with Holy Spirit, effective.

The great Teacher of the Church.

Spiritual truths need higher faculty than intellect.

Satan exercises blinding influence. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Truths understood, yet act only as condemning witnesses.

A receptivity of mind needed.

Not possessed by disciples, hence ch. xvi. 12.

True, Christ able to enlighten them, as Luke xxiv. 45.  
 But not take work out of hands of Holy Spirit.  
 Yet enlightening agency issues from Christ as source.  
 Have we drunk of Spirit.

(2) **A Remembrancer.**

If of Samuel, 1 Sam. iii. 19, *à fortiori* of Christ.  
 Often heard, but as paradoxes.  
 Years afterwards Spirit exercised office.  
 John's Gospel a case in point. Or, John xii. 16.  
 So still, Bible as sword in scabbard.  
 But Holy Spirit works, and sword flashes out.  
 Cases of conversion, by Spirit's application of forgotten word.  
 Office of remembrance includes exhortation, and practical application.  
 All possess Athenian ear.  
 But Spirit gives "precept on precept," yet never tire.  
 All Scripture is simply an expansion of Gen. iii. 15.  
 Yet though familiar, God's people say, Jer. xv. 16.  
 We must be born again.  
 Without the Spirit no real fellowship with Christ.

THE TEST AND PRIVILEGE OF LOVE TO CHRIST.

"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."—John xiv. 21.

The advent of Christ naturally a cause for rejoicing.  
 But it was different with His departure.  
 Yet that departure needful—another agent needed.  
 The true knowledge of Christ could only be acquired through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, v 20.  
 "At that day" a formula constantly used by the prophets.  
 "At that day" they should enjoy, 2 Cor. iv. 6, so that no need to say with Philip, v. 8, or with Jude, v. 22.  
 "At that day" it would be seen who are His disciples. *Text.*

**I. THE TEST OF LOVE TO CHRIST.**

Love does not consist in the mere adoption of similar sentiments.

Men may rail at the world and publish satires against the devil, yet have no love for Christ.

Mere lip-service will never prove love. Cant. viii. 6, 7.

Nor, in experiencing emotion like those felt by believers.

Such emotion may pass away. Hos. vi. 4.

True love goes far beyond this. *Text.*

“He that hath, &c.—*i.e.*, takes possession of them as his rightful property.

One too who is alive to the value of his possession.

A lover makes himself acquainted with the wishes and desires of the object of his love.

The wishes of Christ published in the Scriptures.

Love impels the believer to search the Scriptures.

They are enshrined in his memory—stereotyped in his heart.

But a further criterion added—“and keepeth them.”

So Luke xi. 28—and again, John xiii. 17.

Flesh and blood may esteem Christ's commands hard, but

1 John v. 3.

Love alters aspect of things—as in case of Jacob. Gen. xxix. 20.

The external conduct, an indication of reality of love.

Obedience alone is the true test of love.

This the criterion of a servant's devotion to his master's interests.

An idle servant, a nuisance in a household.

The sinner's love for sin evidenced in his conduct.

The convert charged to show the same love for holiness.

Rom. vi. 13 and 17.

The proof Christ demanded of Peter's affection. John xxi. 17.

Love to Christ not evidenced by volubility of profession of attachment.

Yet this all which too many offer Him.

Love without obedience is hypocrisy.

Apply this.

Christ says, John v. 39.

The apostle says, Heb. x. 25.

Christ says, 1 Cor. xi. 24 (ult.), and again, Matt. xvi. 24.

Easy to multiply tests of this kind.

Apply this criterion to yourselves. 1 Cor. vii. 19.

Love waits for Christ to say “go and it goeth, &c.,

**II. THE PRIVILEGE OF LOVE TO CHRIST.**

Love demands a requital of its affection.  
 The electric cord of sympathy must bind the two.  
 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but love unrequited  
 makes it break.

But there is no love lost in Christ, *text*.

“He shall be loved of my Father.”

Sinful man has forfeited all claim on God’s love.

The soliloquy of an awakened conscience.

But Jesus by His Spirit says “Peace, be still.”

The sense of the Father’s love brought home to His heart.

Then understand, Jer. xxxi. 3, and is able to say, 1 John iv. 19.

“And I will love him.”

Surely this assurance is hardly needed.

Yet it falls like sweet music on the ear.

Assures, He is a brother and friend.

“I will manifest myself unto him.”

It is the *conscious* knowledge of love which rejoices the heart.

Here gives tangible proof of reality of His love.

Uplifts veil to gladden hearts of His people. Cant. ii. 9.

Holy Spirit enlightens understandings. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Hence Jude’s inquiry, vs. 22, 23.

Here a privilege for monarchs to envy, fulfilling Levit.

xxvi. 11.

This a truer, nobler temple than Solomon’s.

The frail child of clay, the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Address unconverted.

Address believers.

**QUENCHING THE SPIRIT.**

“Quench not the Spirit.”—1 Thess. v. 19.\*

Our privilege to live under dispensation of the Spirit.

Our duty therefore to be watchful lest we hinder His work.

Christian jealous of himself, lest haply he should retard consummation for which Christ waits.

Urged to caution by Eph. iv. 30 and *text*.

Spoken primarily of gifts of Spirit in primitive church.

\* *Vide* South’s Sermon on Gen. vi. 3. Vol. II. p. 497.



This appears from its connection with v. 20. Comp.  
1 Cor. xiv. 1.

His agency here represented under figure of "a flame of fire."  
But the injunction of general application.

Applicable to ordinary illuminations and convictions of God's  
Spirit.

Now how are men in danger of quenching the Spirit?

## I. BY DESPISING THE MEANS OF GRACE.

To neglect these, tantamount to neglecting God's word.

To refuse to study word is to oppose the Spirit. 1 Pet. i. 21.

It is "the voice of God and not of man."

The prophet who delivered it might be a mere peasant  
(Amos vii. 14, 15), but woe to those who disobeyed his  
message.

So now, the preacher may be of mean ability, but he sets  
forth God's word.

The law still speaks powerfully to the spiritual ear.

The gospel still pierces like a two-edged sword.

It comes as fiery searching word, unbosoming secret corrup-  
tions.

It convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

It sets forth privileges of believers, and awful doom of un-  
converted.

If you have not felt this, it is because you have "quenched  
the Spirit."

But how is the Spirit quenched when speaking in the  
word?

(1.) **By a careless attendance on, and negligent hearing of it.**

Not speak now of those who neglect it altogether.

Sodom and Gomorrah will rise up in judgment against such.

If the word is a burden, and the Sabbath a weariness, what  
will damnation be?

But there are others who carelessly "quench the Spirit."

Some listen in vacant listlessness.

Some suffer wandering thoughts to intercept seed.

Some sleep.

Is not this a direct insult to God's Holy Spirit?

(2.) **By acting contrary to the precepts of the Word.**

James i. 22. To hear and contradict is to resist the Spirit.

The swearer, the profligate, the indifferent, do not these resist the Spirit?

If Matt. xii. 36, how much more such acts?

He who acts in defiance of God's word, proclaims himself a rebel.

## II. BY RESISTING HIS MORE IMMEDIATE OPERATIONS ON THEIR SOULS.

The fall has made man's soul, like Babylon. Is. xiii. 21.  
But Christ has provided remedy, which Spirit applies.

(1.) *By resisting His operations on the understanding.*

"God is light," and His believing people walk in the light.  
The Spirit enables His people to say 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Besides this three inferior degrees of light which men resist.

(a.) *When they sin against the light of nature.*

It shows what is decent and becoming. Comp. 1 Cor. xi. 14, 15.

This, by whatever name called, the common property of all.  
So John i. 9, *i.e.* the primary archetypal light.

Hence it may be considered the light of the Spirit.

An obscure and imperfect light, the law by which heathen judged.

Hardly need to be warned not to sin against this light.

To be unnatural, far worse than to be profane.

Reverence this light.

(b.) *When they sin against intellectual perception of Spiritual truth.*

Men can read the Bible for themselves.

Heavier punishment for Gospel reprobates than for ignorant heathen.

(c.) *When they sin against certain relish for Gospel truths.*

This the light of the stony ground hearers.

The highest effort the Spirit puts forth on a reprobate soul.

This dwelt on in Heb. vi. 4—6.

Beware, lest yours be the fate of Balaam of old.

(2.) *By resisting His operations on the Will.*

Sensible of holy desires—the first throes of the new birth.

These imperfect, easily overcome, quickly checked.

How often has Spirit whispered "this is the way."

How often has sinner thought of relinquishing his sin.  
How often do some resolve to yield themselves to Christ.  
Yet quench Spirit, by neglecting to improve these blessed  
inclinations.

These should be carried to Christ in prayer.

Despise not then "the day of small things."

The day may come when you may be forced to say Gen.  
xxviii. 16.

Then, turn not a deaf ear to His pleadings and remon-  
strances.

Provoke Him not by your obstinacy.

Yield to His gentle influence.

Address God's children.

Suffer not sacred fire to smoulder on altar of hearts.

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### THE TRINITY, THE SOURCE OF GRACE AND PEACE.

"Grace be unto you, and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come ; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne ; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth."—Rev. i. 4, 5.

Authorship of this Book clearly declared.

St. Paul in his epistles, mentions office and authority.

But St. John had no need to do so.

None likely to confound him with some other John.

Strange that any should have disputed its authorship.

Begins with salutation of grace and peace.

Desires that they might be enriched with fulness of blessing.

Grace had already brought them out of darkness.

But desires they might enjoy more.

Its bestowal assured, when consider source. *Text.*

### I. FIRST PERSON OF TRINITY, STYLED, *text.*

Difficulty in finding language to set forth God.

Scripture employs various methods.

Usual way to proclaim His attributes. Comp. Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Here uniqueness of God's nature.

"Is, and was, and is to come," *i.e.*, the self-existent One.

So at burning bush, "I am."

His presence pervades all space, covers all time.  
 Time has a relation to material things, none to God.  
 Mind bewildered in contemplating Him.

## II. THE THIRD PERSON OF THE TRINITY, STYLED, *text*.

Evidently refers to Holy Ghost, for introduced between  
 Father and Son.

Contradicts notion of created intelligences, as ch. viii. 2.

Seven the number of the Holy Spirit.

Spirit works in the Church, sealing elect, &c.

Began His work at creation.

So ever since, striving with waywardness, inspiring men of  
 God, overruling kings, &c.

In redemption, especially, the Holy Spirit active.

Overshadowed Virgin Mary, anointed Christ.

“Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
 Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.”

These sevenfold gifts in Is. xi. 2.

Christ received these for men, to fulfil Is. xv. 9.

Evidences every day of its being fulfilled.

The Spirit's energy set forth in ch. v. 6.

“Horns, eyes, spirits,” and in a sevenfold degree.

## III. THE SECOND PERSON.

Introduced last, for more to say of Him.

Dwells upon name, Jesus Christ, threefold office.

(1.) **Prophet**, “faithful witness.”

Came as teacher, confirming words by works.

No teacher so persuasive, “spake of what seen.”

His tidings unpalatable, yet persevered.

His faithfulness evidenced before Pilate, John xviii. 37.

“A good confession,” convincing to Pilate.

A king of the truth attracting sympathetic souls.

Exposes worthlessness of Satan's testimony.

Seeks to re-instate men in the truth of their humanity.

(2.) **Priest**. “First-begotten from the dead.”

In person of Christ, death assumed new character.

Became a womb from which new life to spring, “first  
 begotten.”

From it a glorious progeny.  
 Claim kindred with exalted Head.  
 Hung on cross, and lay in grave, as people's representative.  
 As a priest offered Himself, would it be accepted?  
 That question answered on resurrection morn.  
 Then problem solved, veil withdrawn, death the gate to life.

(3.) **King.** "Prince of the kings of the earth."

Kingly office asserted, "many crowns."  
 Christ's offices culminate in, and derive value from His death.  
 His witness perfected in death, and its truth demonstrated  
 in resurrection.

So priestly office.

And now kingly office springing out of obedience to death.  
 A name above every name, conferring eternal life.  
 Supreme in heaven, "let angels worship," in hell, "holds  
 keys," on earth, till "all kings fall before Him."  
 Fitting title at opening of this book, which describes fortunes  
 of the Church.

In vain do earthly powers rebel against Him.

From this triune Jehovah issue grace and peace for  
 every humble believer.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY SCRIPTURAL AND REASONABLE.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness."—  
 Gen. i. 26.

Doctrine of Trinity called "keystone of arch of Evangelical  
 truth."

To-day the Church brings it before us.

Hinted at here in plural Elohim.

In passing, notice symbolical value of numbers.

Ten, symbol of completeness.

Seven, the covenant number, when divided, usually into  
 3 and 4.

Four, represents the world.

Three, signature of Deity, *e.g.*, Gen. xviii. 2, Numb.  
 vi. 24—26, &c.

Here not Trinity, but plurality of persons, *e.g.* Spirit of God  
 distinguished from God in v. 2.

But when compared with Col. i. 15 and Job. xxvi. 13, discern Trinity.

Here a consultation, but men consult not with faculties, but with intelligent beings other than themselves.

So here Triune Jehovah.

Leaving *text*, examine doctrine and inquire.

## I. IS IT SCRIPTURAL ?

Bound to submit to the teaching of Scripture.

God revealed therein.

Doctrine objected to, because word "Trinity" not in Bible.

But childish, for dispute not about words, but truths.

The doctrine in Scripture, though name for it borrowed from the Schools.

If objection valid, all right of interpreting Scripture denied.

Object of interpretation to translate language of inspiration into language of every day life.

Now Scripture furnishes accumulation of proofs.

Heb. i. 1, 2 and Luke x. 22. Two distinct persons.

As Father, a correlative term, Son must be eternal, otherwise no Father.

Third person not virtue or efficacy of Deity, for personal actions attributed to Him.

John xv. 26. Matt. iii. 16, 17. Matt. xxviii. 19.

But objection, Judaism monotheistic, Deut. vi. 4.

If by this, imply Christianity tritheistic, Athanasian Creed a protest.

But at that period, multiplication of Deities universal.

Judaism a protest against heathenism.

Jews could not then receive a metaphysical distinction, but from three Persons would conclude three Gods.

Times of ignorance now passed away.

Our safety in taking Scripture honestly as our guide.

Opposers of the doctrine too often flippant.

Churchmen now sympathize with Socinians.

Objections to Athanasian creed betray impatience of dogmatic teaching, and love of negative theology.

Beware of yielding to tendency of sceptical age. John iii. 12.

## II. IS IT REASONABLE ?

Though proved to be Scriptural, still a legitimate inquiry.

A fundamental axiom that Scriptures does not contradict reason.

Not unreasonable, for profoundest thinkers hold it.  
Not to be classed, as Socinians assert, with transubstantiation.

Latter contradicts evidence of senses.\*

Above reason, not contrary to it.

What should be our attitude? Rom. iii. 4.

Not a physical distinction, but a metaphysical.

Therefore more difficult to illustrate it.

But a Trinity in man, see 1 Thess. v. 23.†

A Trinity in matter, shape, size, colour.

These illustrations show its reasonableness.

In Scripture many things hard to be understood.

Men give way to cavilling spirit, till either worship God of own conceptions, or deny His existence.

This tendency of present day as seen.

(1) In scientific men explaining God out of creation.

(2) In working men corrupted by Socialism, which is based on Atheism.

Results seen in French communistic revolution.

Unseen Jehovah not withdrawn from world, cannot be mocked.

He who said "let us make man," formed us for Himself.

Cultivate communion with Him. Ps. lviii. 11.

## ELECTION.

"Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. i. 2.

A glorious description of the Church.

The confederacy of the Sacred Trinity in the work of human salvation, a mysterious subject.

Consider experience of saints as expressed in *text*.

First, dwell shortly on word "elect."

This doctrine constantly presented in the New Testament.

It is therefore false to stigmatize it, as a mere dogma of systematic theology.

Many efforts used to put a false meaning on the word.

\* Robertson's Sermon on 1 Thess. v. 23. Vol. III.

† Scott's Essay on Religion.

It signifies the calling of God, (*vide* Art. xvii.).  
 Sometimes used of election to an office, as 1 Sam. x. 24,  
 Thus Judas elected to apostleship, John vi. 70, but contrast  
 xiii. 18.  
 Sometimes by election to national privileges. Deut. vii. 6.  
 It is in this sense applied to Christian Churches.  
 But also, and especially used by individuals. Rom. xi. 4, 5.  
 Now this election is :

## I. "ACCORDING TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD THE FATHER."

Foreknowledge may mean simply prescience. Acts xv. 18.  
 Pelagianism asserts that this is meant here.  
 But God's grace does not find, but *makes* man willing to  
 embrace the Gospel.  
 God's foreknowledge springs as much from His omnipotence,  
 as from His omniscience.  
 Therefore foreknowledge is predetermination, as in v. 20.  
 This absolute predetermination is the very condition of  
 election.  
 This most comforting and encouraging to believers.  
 Their love an evidence of God's love to them.  
 Their obedience an evidence of their Sonship.  
 The grace in their hearts has its source in God's foreknow-  
 ledge, and will empty itself in the ocean of salvation.

## II. "THROUGH OR IN SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT."

This, the conditional element of believer's existence.  
 Distinguish between sanctification and justification.  
 Former succeeds latter, and hence strangeness of order in *text*.  
 But sanctification implies also separation from the world,  
 and attraction to Christ.  
 All means of grace are designed to effect regeneration as  
 preliminary to salvation. John iii. 3.  
 Designed to show sinfulness of state of nature, and attrac-  
 tions of holiness.  
 But it is not easy to throw off yoke of sin.  
 Men remain wedded to it even against their better judgment.  
 Hence an external call not enough.  
 Operation of Holy Spirit needed in addition.



The Word is the means of sanctification, (John xvii. 17)  
 but only when applied by Spirit.  
 His voice a penetrating one, other voices only appeal to intellect, &c.  
 He draws the sinner to Christ.

### III. "UNTO OBEDIENCE."

Doctrine of election must exert a practical influence.  
 Believers are elected *to obedience*, or Rom. viii. 29.  
 Christ disowns mere talkative professors. Matt. vii. 21.  
 He demands obedience, and His elect render it, v. 22.  
 The truth has acquired an irresistible authority over them.  
 Their obedience cheerful, constant and impartial.  
 Emulates obedience of angels.

Coupled with this is "sprinkling of the blood, &c."  
 The two things coupled, as being of the same nature.  
 Refer to Exod. xxiv. 6—8. Division of blood significant.  
 Atonement for sin effected on cross.  
 Then Christ as High Priest, went into holy place with the blood.

Who looks to that blood, is justified.  
 But this not enough, for renewal also needed.  
 Hence book of law read, and blood sprinkled, sealing the people to obedience.  
 So believers purged from evil conscience, and disposed for pursuit of all that is pure and holy.  
 This why it is mentioned last, since it refers not to our justification, but to the very climax of our sanctification.  
 Christ's blood sprinkled on soul, infuses His life into it.  
 What an elevating view of great work of redemption!  
 It is much to know that our guilt is washed away.  
 How much more to know that Christ's holiness is a part of our being.

Thus we are "in Him that is true," sit "in the heavenly places."

We thus understand the climax in Heb. xii. 24.

Address believers.

Appeal to unconverted.

## THE INDWELLING OF GOD IN MAN.

"Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."—1 John iv. 13.

Important to have right views of religion.

Need to be assured that our service to God is consistent with Divine revelation.

Now Scripture asserts that true religion is :

- (1.) Of an enlightening character.
- (2.) Of a sanctifying character.
- (3.) Of an absorbing character.

It furnishes us with tests and evidences on the subject.

These tests we ought to apply seriously.

Nowhere more abundant than in this Epistle. *Text.*

A test of more than ordinary importance for, ch. iii. 24. Love mainly dwelt on in this Epistle, as God's great characteristic.

God cannot be seen, v. 12 (1st part).

But love naturally desires to behold its object.

Moreover love seeks to rest in that object.

How shall we know that our love rests on God? v. 12 ult.

He has not left Himself without witness.

But we have another evidence of His indwelling. *Text.*

**I. WHAT THE APOSTLE MEANS BY THIS INDWELLING.**

This "indwelling," the key note of this Epistle.

True religion consists not in orthodox views, but in presence of God in the soul.

First, then, what is meant by "our dwelling in God?"

Generally it involves :

- (1.) Closeness of relationship to God.

When actually in an object, in closest possible proximity to it.

Sin has estranged us from God.

But Eph. ii. 13—so nigh, that you can grasp Him by faith.

- (2.) Intimacy of communion with God.

Every believer enjoys Abraham's privilege. James ii. 23.

Through Christ he has freedom of access.

Can hold unceasing intercourse.

(3.) **Union in God.**

John xiv. 20. At that day of Pentecostal blessing.

Ye shall know it by the utter absence of divided interests.

This was what Jesus prayed for. John xvii. 21.

Where strife and envy exist among Christians, there is no  
"dwelling in God."

Secondly, what is meant by "God dwelling in us?"

Refers to indwelling of Holy Ghost.

Paul's appeal is, 1 Cor. iii. 16.

Christ so revealed to sinner that he becomes transformed.

## II. HOW SHALL WE ASCERTAIN THAT WE THUS DWELL IN GOD, AND GOD IN US?

Not by sensible manifestation.

Not by fanciful conjecture.

Not by inferential argument.

The proof is that furnished by the *text*.

We are professing Christians, but have we the indwelling of  
the Spirit?

Do we realize indwelling of promised Comforter?

Do we understand Rom. viii. 9, 11, 14—16?

Every believer has been made to drink of God's Spirit.

A subject for most serious inquiry.

Need to bring forth fruits of spirit.

We shall give evidence of reality of new birth.

(1.) **By boldly confessing Christ.** v. 15.

(2.) **By showing our love for the Brethren.** chap. iii. 14.

(3.) **By hearty and unreserved obedience.** iii. 24.

## THE SUFFICIENCY OF DIVINE REVELATION.

"Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."—Luke xvi. 29, 30.

The Son of Man's sublime declaration. Rev. i. 18.

The language of One who died and rose again.

Yet this power He wielded before His death.

Here He reveals to us Lazarus and Dives.

Confine attention to the two verses of *text*.  
A contrast here drawn setting forth.

## I. THE SUFFICIENCY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. v. 29.

Conscious of existence beyond the grave.  
How shall we fit ourselves for our glorious destiny hereafter?  
Where seek for information but from God?  
Have we any revelation made to us? Yes, Holy Scripture.  
The Bible asserts itself to be the only revelation of  
God's will.

Is. viii. 20. An important passage—turn to it.  
Unhealthy craving for information as to the future.  
Not satisfied with what God has revealed in Word.  
Illustrated in *seances* of Spiritualists.  
Proclaims heathenish character of those who practise it.  
A form of necromancy here condemned. Is. viii. 19, 20.  
Such pretended communications from spirit-world not only  
untrustworthy, but also superfluous.  
Bible travels over whole ground attempted by Spiritualists.  
Condemned by God as a usurpation of office of Christ, the  
true Zaphnath-paaneah. Gen. xli. 45.  
The circle of Divine revelation complete. Rev. xxii. 18.  
Even if it were not, this prurient curiosity wrong, for enough  
revealed in less favoured times.  
Perverse inquirers referred back to Moses and the prophets.  
*Text*.

But sufficiently further evidenced by three considerations.

### (1.) It is clear.

Wizards "peep and mutter," but Bible speaks clearly.  
It points to man as a sinner—helpless.  
It points to Christ as a Saviour.  
It draws back the curtain of the future.  
It discloses the way of holiness. Is. xxxv. 8.

### (2.) It is reliable.

Trustworthiness of information depends on character of  
informant.  
Here it is God who speaks. 2 Pet. i. 21.  
Testimony of Scripture unanimous on this point.  
How foolish to distrust such testimony.

## (3.) It is convincing.

Some authors carry readers with them, by skilful use of language and force of reasoning.

But Holy Ghost employs a higher method of conviction.

Heb. iv. 12. Its power felt even by reprobates.

It pierces heart, unbosoms sins, reveals mysteries.\*

The persuasiveness witnessed by martyrs,

“ Who dared  
“ The deadliest form that death could take,  
And dared it for the Master’s sake.”

The world gazed with awe at the spectacle.

Unbelievers deserve to be given over to reprobate mind, or sent back, like children, to imperfect elements. *Text.*

## II. THE STUBBORNNESS OF UNBELIEF. v. 30.

Dives disputes wisdom of God’s plan.

Strange how many fancy they could suggest a better.

Hence they find fault with God’s providential arrangements.

The sinner complains that he is more sinned against, than sinning.

Unbelief a result of habit of disputing God’s testimony.

Newman’s “ Phases of Faith,” a remarkable illustration.

The love of sin, too, operates in the same direction.

So that language here, consistent with previous career of the lost voluptuary. *Text.*

But examine the suggestion—will it answer ?

Observe he proposes a policy of terror.

The policy of a base and abject mind—that of Church of Rome.

Opposed to method of Holy Spirit infusing confidence.

Unbelief and credulity strangely united.

Sceptics will swallow impudent impostures.

“ Yea, I have seen grey-headed man, the bastard slip of science,  
Go for light to glow-worms, while they scorn the sun at noon,  
Men who fear no God, trembling at a gipsy’s curse,  
Men who jest at revelation, clinging to a madman’s prophecy.”†

Precisely this class who desire, as *text*.

But after fear subsides, old habit of scepticism will return.

\* South’s Sermon on Gen. vi. 3, vol. II. p. 500.

† M. F. Tupper, in Dictionary of Poetical Illustrations.

Is not God sending messengers who have felt power of grace?  
A power mightier than the disembodied spirit has experienced?

Did not Lazarus rise from the dead?

Yea Christ did, yet the world still incredulous.

Divine wisdom knew it would be unavailing, therefore  
Acts x. 40, 41.

World impervious to teaching of the resurrection.

Apply it—why are you unconverted?

You throw blame on others.

You demand a more convincing agency.

Put away cavilling spirit, and say: "Lord, I believe, help  
Thou mine unbelief."

### THE SIEGE OF JERICO.

"Now Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in."—Josh. vi. 1.

An eventful crisis in fortunes of chosen people.

Crossed Jordan—a time of peculiar solemnity.

Renewed covenant of circumcision, kept passover.

A Divine Being had appeared as "Captain of the Lord's  
Host."

Now campaign must be opened by capture of Jericho.

God interposes to give directions.

Type of method of victory in warfare with sin.

### I. THE BELEAGUERED CITY. v. 1.

Its situation made it "a place of fragrance."

A city of no mean wealth, for one man secured, chap. vii. 21.

Garrison confident in strength of its fortifications.

True, like Rahab, confessed a mysterious fear.

Yet they would forget it, as watched proceedings of besiegers.

Flung out yells of defiance as Israelites marched round.

A picture of the world's perversity.

Christ in progress at head of army, issuing invitations of  
Gospel.

Every carnal heart, a Jericho shut up.

Perversity of sinners, in rejecting God's overtures of grace  
marvellous.

Shut up every avenue by which Christ may enter in.

Pride and ignorance, &c., the ramparts of their soul.  
 Yet, sinner conscious of uneasy conviction of guilt.  
 Flashes of fear smite him behind ramparts of unbelief.  
 As Job xv. 21—but world draws away his thoughts.  
 Despises Christianity as antiquated system of religion.  
 Bible sneered at—public worship neglected.  
 Truly world, like Jericho, is “straitly shut up.”

## II. THE STRANGENESS OF THE SIEGE OPERATIONS.

Its capture to be effected by Divine agency.  
 Means employed show theocratic character of transaction.  
 Describe method of siege. vs. 9, 10.  
 God putting honour on His own ordinances and symbols.  
 The number “seven” bespoke theocratic character.  
 Israel commanded to “stand still and see salvation of God.”

Here see method employed in salvation of elect.

2 Cor. x. 4. An inspired commentary on all this.  
 Church is an army equipped for arduous campaign.  
 Weapons contemptible, yet experience proves them formidable.

Point especially to sword in list of weapons given in Eph.  
 vi. 11—18.

“Preach the word” is command given and obeyed.  
 Ps. lxxviii. 11.

Yet, we know how contemptible it is to some. 1 Cor. i. 18.  
 Look back at a few fishermen awaking a slumbering world.  
 What human wisdom would have thought of such a plan.  
 How many are now stammering, tongue-tied preachers.  
 Even the ablest, powerless to apply Divine truth to conscience.  
 Our preaching like “blowing rams’ horns.”

But we know under whose command we fight.

Must blow for the six days of our natural life, since God’s  
 dispensations have their own prefixed period.

God’s purposes are being answered. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

Command is Is. lxxviii. 1, therefore persevere, persuaded that  
 “foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

## III. THEIR SUCCESS.

The seventh day arrived, v. 16—20.

God evidently at work.

Reminded of Numb. xxiii. 21.

The shout of confident faith.

The shout of prevailing prayer.

Anticipation of the shout of 1 Thess. iv. 16.

History a fulfilment of this antitype.

Christianity though despised, invests Christian with power like Acts vi. 10.

Its marvellous progress warranting Tertullian's appeal, in the second century.

Walls of Jericho falling daily in conversion of sinners.

Shout of faith and prayer raised by Church, draws down answer from heaven.

Inquire, if walls of unbelief beaten down from your heart.

There are Jerichos still to be demolished.

Raise voice to Captain, and then say, "see what hath God wrought."

## ROOM.

"And yet there is room."—Luke xiv. 22.

Matter of fact very different from dreams of the imagination.

Events in the world the reverse of previous speculations.

We should have thought the Son of God would have been welcomed.

That the offers of mercy would have been accepted.

Man's infatuation set forth in this parable.

Let us beware lest we fall after same example of unbelief.

Confine the attention to *text*.

"And yet there is room." Where?

## I. IN GOD'S ELECTING LOVE.

His eye marked out His own people.

In His own time makes them "polished stones."

He has borne with their waywardness, and led them into "rest."

He is ever carrying out this programme of His sovereign will. Refrains from judgment, "till tribes of elect gathered in."

If we say Luke xiii. 23, Christ answers v. 24.

If we say, I am not one of the elect, guilty of presumption, and of making God a liar.

He appeals to us as responsible beings.



Rather think He has set His love upon you, and so be spurred on to obedience.

Thus find this doctrine "full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort."

Come to God believing *text*.

## II. IN THE REDEMPTION CHRIST HAS WROUGHT FOR HIS PEOPLE.

His sacrifice all-sufficient.

His bowels yearn over sinners as of old. Matt. xxiii. 37.

Hangs on cross to attract all eyes and melt all hearts.

Why should you hesitate to believe. 2 Cor. v. 21.

Why should you think there is still something for you to do?

All has been done—the atonement is made—the feast is spread.

But do you shrink because you are guilty? Luke v. 32.

You are come to your Father's house where there is "room."

Then think of the change wrought by faith.

No longer borne helplessly along current of sin.

No longer a degraded slave.

No longer a condemned culprit.

Accept grace proffered while "yet there is room."

## III. IN THE SANCTIFYING INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Rom. viii. 9 ult. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

To step out of domain of sight into that of faith, work of Spirit.

Through Him alone able to rest in finished work of Christ.

By nature man utterly powerless to obey call.

The nominal Christian like a painted well-dressed corpse.

The most profound natural intellect cannot understand spiritual truths.

You need the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

You ask where shall I find Him?

He is about your path, whispering holy suggestions, &c.

Oh resist Him not.

As a believer heaven is yours, but you need to be "made meet" for heaven.

Yield to His loving influence "while yet there is room."

**IV. IN THE CHURCH MILITANT BELOW.**

Experience proves we have not yet entered into rest.  
 A warfare going on without and within us. Is. ix. 5.  
 The enemy has taken the field, but the Spirit has lifted up  
 standard, and trumpet of Gospel been sounded.  
 Hosts of Satan leagued to oppose truth.  
 Surely "room" for more soldiers to enlist under banner of  
 cross.  
 Need to unite and use every weapon.  
 Need especially now—day of final decision near.  
 The Church of Christ now happily alive to her responsibility.  
 She calls on you to help. Numb. x. 29.  
 "The fields are white to harvest," and heathen cry Acts  
 xvi. 9.  
 Take part in the great work while "yet there is room."

**V. IN THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT ABOVE.**

The soldier of the cross longs for rest.  
 If home-sick emigrant pines for his native land, if labourer  
 for close of day, so believer. 2 Cor. v. 4.  
 At present its nature indescribable, but we know we shall be  
 "for ever with the Lord."  
 Here poverty, pain, &c., but there how different!

"Oh change—oh wondrous change!  
 Burst are the prison bars—  
 This moment there, so low,  
 So agonized, and now  
 Beyond the stars.

Oh change—stupendous change!  
 There lies the soulless clod;  
 The sun eternal breaks—  
 The new immortal wakes—  
 Wakes with his God."

The shout that greets the conqueror rings in christian's  
 dying ears, impelling us to say Numb. xxiii. 10.  
 Is there room for us in that white-robed throng?  
 Yes, for Jesus is preparing *many* mansions.  
 Is. xliii. 6, and as they come the cry heard.  
 These, the glorious tidings we have to proclaim.  
 The inheritance is yours. Rev. xxii. 17.

## THE CHARACTER AND SANCTION OF THE GOSPEL.

"And this is His commandment, That we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He gave us commandment."  
1 John iii. 23.

Various forms under which Gospel is presented in Scripture.  
Salvation sometimes described as an act of repentance.

Mark. i. 15, Acts ii. 38.

At others as an act of obedience. Rom. vi. 17, Heb. v. 9.

At others as a forsaking the world. 2 Cor. vi. 17, 1 Thess. i. 9.

Here it is described as an act of faith and love.

Again various sanctions by which the Gospel is enjoined.

Sometimes salvation represented as an offer. Heb. vi. 18.

Sometimes as an invitation.

Sometimes as a promise. 2 Tim. i. 1, 1 John ii. 25.

But here, as a commandment.

Still it is one and same Gospel—consider then.

## I. THE CHARACTER IN WHICH IT IS PRESENTED.

As an act of faith and love.

(1). Faith comes first, as the foundation.

Very excellent things spoken of faith in Scripture.

We are to believe in Jesus not simply as an historical celebrity.

Such a faith is the mere assent of understanding.

Saving faith is persuaded of truth of all revelation.

It is to believe in the supremacy of His person.

To believe in the truth of His mission as the Messiah.

To believe in the all-sufficiency of His atoning sacrifice.

Such here—but observe form, "in name" as Acts iii. 16.

Name not as charm, but as expressing His character, &c.

To believe in Him as Jesus, the Saviour.

To believe in Him as Christ, anointed by God.

To believe in Him as Immanuel.

These enjoy saving interest in Him. John vi. 40.

Yet this, only imperfectly sets forth apostle's meaning.

The Gospel plan of Salvation leaves nothing for man to do.

John vi. 28, 29.

Only personal experience of believer can realize all involved in *text*.

It implies, that we approve Him in our judgments, as the Saviour suited to our wants.

That we desired Him in our consciences, as the peace giver.  
That we receive Him in our hearts, as earnest of future happiness.

That we trust in Him alone for salvation.

May God give us all such a faith as this.

(2). *Still more excellent things spoken of love.*

Love has the supremacy over all other graces.

It is the great commandment of the Gospel. John xiii. 34, xv. 12.

This the grand characteristic of Christ's followers.

While men urge motives of self-interest, honour, or ambition,  
Christ urges love.

John enforces it as sum and substance of true piety.

In society it is sometimes hard to avoid giving offence.

Foibles of our neighbours provoke malicious criticism.

But Christians not like Ham, jesting at his father's nakedness.

We must exercise restraint in many ways.

Then too, presence of poor and needy excites sympathy.

Love for them exciting us to help, a test of soundness of faith.

Hence 1 Thess. iv. 9.

Such the character, Gospel here presented.

## **II. THE SANCTION BY WHICH THE GOSPEL IS HERE ENJOINED.**

If God had only given permission or recommendation, it would have been our duty to comply.

But how much more when it is a commandment.

Revelation of God's will, places man under a dispensation of law.

Yet not a harsh commandment.

If we refuse we are our own destroyers.

A commandment, too, presupposes power and ability to obey it.

When God invites man, He at same time supplies power.

He does not harshly scrutinize our poor endeavours. Mark xiv. 8.

Without obeying this, our profession of faith worthless.

1 John iv. 20.

Without this our morality only varnished hypocrisy.

In keeping this we keep the whole law.

Are we doing so?

## JERUBBAAL.

"And Joash said unto all that stood against him, will ye plead for Baal? Will ye save him? He that will plead for him, let him be put to death while it is yet morning; if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar. Therefore on that day He called him Jerubbaal, saying, let Baal plead against him, because He hath thrown down His altar."—Judg. vi. 31, 32.

Israel now oppressed by Midianites.

They were helpless, as idolators who had ceased to seek the Lord.

"A reign of terror" seems to have supervened.

Their ancient prowess had deserted them.

At this juncture Gideon is told to destroy Baal's altar.

The excitement of the villagers, and demand made on Joash.

## I. THE REASONING OF JOASH. V. 31.

Gideon's position critical, and alarming.

Idolators frenzied by superstition, know nothing of toleration.

But Joash is equal to the occasion, and replies with good humoured banter.

Joash and his son seem to have understood each other.

At all events he recognizes the culprit, and boldly defends him.

Gideon had other sympathizers, his father's ten servants.

Joash says, "how presumptuous to undertake for Baal."

Thus he laughs at Baal's impotence.

So Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 27.

So Isaiah reasoned, ch. xlv.

Even the heathen Lucian adopts this reasoning.\*

It tells upon the exasperated and superstitious villagers.

Heathenism has no firm belief in its own superstitions.

It is only a tissue of cunningly devised fables.

The Church is entrusted with God's revelation of Himself.

But like Israel it suffers the world's unbelief to amalgamate with it, hence scepticism.

Men question facts of Scripture, and substitute their own heathenish systems.

Divine truth, they say, must be moulded to suit modern thought.

\* Lange's Commentary in loco.

Hence both facts, and doctrines of Scripture denied.  
 The descent of the human race from one pair, and the  
 universality of the deluge have long been ridiculed.  
 But now they essay a bolder flight, and put forth novel  
 theories of their own.  
 One asserts man to be a development of the mollusc.  
 (Darwin).  
 Another traces creation to the atomic theory. (Tyndall).  
 A third offers himself as St. Paul's interpreter, and points us,  
 not to God, but to "an enduring power, other than our-  
 selves, that makes for righteousness." (M. Arnold).  
 Do they really believe in their shallow theories?  
 Some other savant after a while disproves their theory.  
 May not the Church therefore adopt the reasoning of  
 Joash?  
 Wait a little, and these scientific boasters will overthrow  
 each other's conclusions.  
 God's foundation is unaffected by their criticisms.  
 "Professing themselves to be wise, they become fools."  
 Stamp of pettiness and evanescence branded on every human  
 system.

Our little systems have their day,  
 They have their day and cease to be ;  
 They are but broken lights of Thee,  
 And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.\*

## II. THE SURNAME HE CONFERS UPON HIS SON. v. 32.

A name which was of encouraging significance.  
 "One whom Baal will punish," but who spite of him,  
 lives on.  
 It appealed to susceptibilities of an ignorant and super-  
 stitious people.  
 It would have the same effect as, Acts xxiii. 3, 6.  
 Waxing daily bolder, Jerubbaal becomes an omen of victory.  
 Much to encourage us in this incident.  
 Gideon's surname was a challenge to Baal to do his worst.  
 This must be our attitude as Christian soldiers.  
 Our Captain points out qualifications needful in his soldiers.  
 John xviii. 37 (ult).  
 Its confessors must needs run risk of conflict.  
 Needs no ordinary courage to face the world's frowns.

\* Tennyson.

Hence, too, many Christians exhibit vacillation.  
 Like Gideon we must throw down the gauntlet.  
 We must demolish altar of self-love and self-worship.  
 Only thus can you achieve success.  
 Truth is a portionless virgin who must be married for herself.  
 Who draws sword in truth's quarrel, must fling away scabbard.  
 Cross must be taken up without reservation. Luke xiv. 26.  
 Then our name, like Jerubbaal, would be a rallying force.  
 This made Paul a leader of men. 1 Cor. xi. 1.  
 He cast aside self-interest, ambition, and even self-preservation, so that, Acts xxi. 13.  
 This is what we are called on to imitate.  
 The time calls on us to cast aside indecision.  
 There is now a mustering of hosts for battle. Rev. xvi. 14.  
 God calls us, as He did Gideon.  
 Thus achieve success—avoid curse of lukewarmness, Rev. iii. 16—acknowledged by Christ in great day.

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### THE LOST SHEEP.

"What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he cometh home he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."—Luke xv. 4—6.

Simplicity and beauty in Christ's language here.  
 In fulfilling ministry excites scorn, v. 2.  
 Strange that *sinner*s should cavil at such conduct.  
 Picture scene.  
 Pharisees idea of moral purity, *e.g.* John Baptist.  
 But Christ as good Physician comes into immediate contact.  
 For Him, therefore, only revilings, v. 2.  
 Imply that this is prevailing feature of His ministry.  
 Parables show unreasonableness in taking offence.  
 Three parables closely connected.  
 Two first illustrate God's seeking love; third, its responsive operation.  
 But confine to first, where two important truths.

**I. GOD'S CONCERN FOR THE LOST. v. 4.**

Imagery here commends itself to hearers, both from pastoral habits, and from familiarity with Old Testament language. Jehovah set forth as shepherd, Israel as flock.

Familiar also with confessions of Old Testament saints. Is. liii. 6. Ps. cxix. 176.

Most applicable to Jews at that time.

True of all, of Scribes, &c., but forcible illustration in these publicans and sinners.

These the "lost sheep" whom Scribes, as under-shepherds were neglecting.

Christ in parable convicts them of unfaithfulness, and points to Himself as true shepherd. Ezek. xxxiv. 23.

Well does Son of David vindicate Himself by appeal, v. 4.

Thoughtful mind saddened at sight of ruin.

The ruined temple, depraved sot, &c.

Instinctive desire to repair ruin.

This desire finds noblest expression in God.

For "lost sheep" all outflowings of His love streamed forth.

Comparative indifference to saved inheritance.

Not ask who are the ninety-nine, whether angels, or saints, or Pharisees.

But departure not imply real indifference.

Intended to show God's concern for the individual—the unit.

Concern of father for prodigal. Woman for drachma.

But here rich proprietor.

Comforting to despondent—silencing to sceptic.

Can God care for man?

Yes, nature itself answers by pointing to meanest works as illustrating God's care

Moss in desert comforting to Mungo Park.\*

If address here penitent, say Ps. xl. 17.

**II. HIS JOY AT THEIR RECOVERY. v. 5, 6.**

God's concern, evidenced also by labours imposed on Himself. Christ laid aside glory—the good shepherd.

"When found" joy thrills—evidenced by treatment.

No harsh measures, "on own shoulders."

Coincides with experience of believer.

Awakened sinner sees guilt depicted in blackest colours.

\* Dict. of Prose Illustrations.



Thunders of Sinai, conscience, &c.  
But finds Jesus pointing to cross and grave.

"O love, thou bottomless abyss !  
My sins are swallowed up in thee,  
Covered is my unrighteousness,  
Nor spot of guilt remains on me.  
While Jesu's blood, through earth and skies,  
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries."

But joy cannot be confined to Himself.  
Joy an expansive emotion.  
Representation of parable true to nature.  
But sublime considerations when transferred to God.  
Mark scene of joy, v. 10.  
How pure and disinterested.  
Caused by knowledge of results of one conversion.  
Speaks of condescension of God.  
Learn infinite value of immortal soul.  
To each of us, personal interest all absorbing.  
But see God also concerned.  
If therefore to Him, how much more to you.  
Has Jesus found you?

### CHRIST AND HIS GUESTS.

"This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."—Luke v. 2.

Condescension of Christ illustrative of all His transactions  
in grace.

He stoops to save ungrateful man.

He makes His salvation precious to the chief of sinners.

These words spoken in house of one of the chief  
Pharisees.

Our Lord deals unsparingly with their formalism.

Now another class attracted to the great Teacher. v. 1.

"They were busied in drawing near."\*

Mark vexation of the Pharisees.

Their reproach proves Him to be the true Messiah.

*Text* as true to-day, as it was then.

### I. THE HOST.

Estimate privileges of invitation, according to rank of host.

He who invites us to Lord's Supper, is God Himself.

\* *Vide* Trench on Parables.

He is not personally present, but really, to every faithful recipient.

A secret link connects awakened sinner with Christ.

Catches glimpse of His beauty through the lattice of ordinances.

Yet some like these Pharisees, despise the Host.

"This man"—an expression of withering scorn.

This low pretender to dignities.

This vilest of men, as afterwards they cried.

But let us realize all that "this man" is to us.

"This man" is the Lord of life and glory.

O that He may reveal Himself to us to-day!

## II. THE GUESTS.

Invited guests are usually of same rank with host.

But Jesus furnishes a worthier rule. Luke xiv. 12-14.

Here sits with sinners.

These Christ desires to see, for they are filled with humility.

His object is to do them good.

But Pharisees malignantly infer that He thus proves Himself to be a sinner.

The false reasoning of shallow, jealous minds.

He who would raise others, must first descend to their level.

Proves His divine character, for "God receiveth sinners."\*

The more a man resembles God the more gracious is he towards sinners.

Christ acts like His ancestor David. 1 Sam. xxii. 2.

Such always attracted to Christ.

This must be our spirit, in order to enjoy sense of His presence.

Persons fancy they must be holy to draw near the Lord's Table.

But Jesus invites you *as sinners*.

Come as sinners who loathe your sins.

May God reveal the depravity of our hearts, that we may come as sinners, encouraged by *text*.

## III. THE ENTERTAINMENT.

They came not to a sumptuous meal, but to hear Jesus.

They hungered after righteousness.

\* Stier's Words of the Lord Jesus, vol. iv., 104.

His doctrine more refreshing than that of the Scribes.

They sat entranced with admiration.

They forgot the miseries of their condition.

Yea, the scorn of the Pharisees unnoticed by them.

This entertainment no sumptuous feast.

It is a spiritual repast.

These elements speak of Christ's grace.

They speak of pardon through faith in his blood.

They speak of peace secured.

They speak of an assured hope.

Draw near then, for the guests cannot be too numerous.

In His royal treasury of grace there is enough and to spare.

Here you have wholesome food, better than the manna  
which Israel gathered.

Jesus calls you, saying, Cant. v. i.

### ELI.

"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."—1 Sam. iii. 13.

Combination of evil and good in men's characters.

Yearnings after better things displayed by fallen men.

Unconverted persons often like Milton's Satan, "his form  
had not yet lost all his original brightness."

On the other hand renewed believers retain taint of evil  
nature.

Evil in them often neutralizes and counteracts the good.

See this especially in the case of those who

"Live in that fierce light which beats upon the throne  
And blackens every blot."

This illustrated in the case of Eli.

## I. HIS VIRTUES.

Look first at bright side of his character.

During his long tenure of office proved his unaffected piety.

Regarded by people with veneration as one who realized,  
Heb. v. 2.

But consider three traits in his character.

**(1.) His devotedness to God's Service.**

First introduced to him in chap. i. 9, as if overlooking.

Example to ministers of Gospel, to die in harness.

Perhaps his excess of devotedness prompted him to rebuke Hannah.

A rash censure, but one justified, had his impression been correct.

Temple no place for drunkards, yet contrast his timid expostulation, chap. ii. 24.

Fire of his zeal, dimmed by parental weakness, brightened at last.

Sadly watched progress of lawlessness, he was powerless to restrain.

Capture of ark broke his heart.

His tragical death evidences reality of his devotedness.

**(2.) His humility.**

Placed in a very painful position. "Word of the Lord precious," v. 1.

Who would so eagerly watch for a revelation as the High Priest? Comp. Numb. xxvii. 21.

But it is made to his boyish servitor instead.

Picture our feelings under such circumstances.

But Eli meekly acquiesces in the Divine arrangement.

Entertains no feeling of jealousy towards Samuel.

Assists his rival to rise, v. 9.\*

Eli's conduct very beautiful.

In struggle for existence, how often do men resort to unworthy artifices.

How mortified we are when out-distanced by a rival.

Learn to imitate Eli's generous humility.

**(3.) His resignation to God's will.**

His eager desire to know what God had told Samuel.

Yet he knew well it could be no gratifying communication.

How beautiful is his reception of the tidings, v. 18.

"Resignation to the will of God is the whole of piety."

(Bishop Butler.)

Men make a fearful mistake in disputing God's justice or love.

Lament. iii. 39. Why complain of his benefactor—of his judge?

\* Robertson's Sermon on 1 Sam. iii. 1; vol. IV.

Rather let him refrain his lips, like Aaron. Levit. x. 3.  
An unbridled tongue proclaims enmity of heart, not like  
Eli, or Christ.

Say with the sainted Leighton, "If I be in light, blessed  
be Thou, but if in darkness, then blessed be Thou too."

I have been dumb and held my peace,  
Because the stroke was Thine ;  
When Thou dost bare Thy holy arm,  
Omnipotent, Divine,  
Shall mortal man, corrupt within,  
Complain that Thou dost visit sin ?

Thou didst it, Lord ! This sorrow came  
Obedient to Thy will ;  
Thy hands have made me ; O in wrath  
Remember mercy still.  
I will be silent at Thy awful throne.  
Lord, Thou hast fashioned me ; Thy will be done !

## II. HIS ONE GREAT FAILING.

Eli's sons could not say they had not a holy example.  
"Parents cannot give grace to their children," urged as  
explanation of wickedness of children of pious parents.  
But true explanation to be sought, not in arbitrariness of  
God's grace, but in natural causes.

Here God puts His finger on the plague spot, *text*.

But objected, how could he restrain them ?

He could when they were young. Prov. xxii. 6.

They grew up to be their country's plague.

They were in fact spoiled children, grown up without  
discipline.

The same thing constantly seen in Christian families.  
Mischievous consequences not so wide spread, but equally  
painful.

See fathers spoiling sons, who grow up idle adventurers.

See mothers training daughters in idle thriftless habits.

Why should Christian parents be guilty of such unnatural  
cruelty ?

Parents complain of wicked son, though they have set him  
good example.

But you never checked him for his faults, nor insisted on  
obedience.

Mothers especially liable to this failing.

You are dealing unjustly by your children.

Lament. iii. 27. If not, severity and cruelty must be used to reform him, so that sin of Eli lies at your door.

This concerns all, as parents, as citizens, as Christians. We see loosening of moral ties which bind society.

In Eli, see consequences of feebleness of will, which springs from a half and half kind of religion.

God has made us parents arbiters of our children's fate.

We want to have our wills braced up, and not to go on sinning and repenting.

Elies of this world full of eloquent regrets, but drift helplessly down.

Let our prayer be Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

Such a heart will exhibit strength of character, combined with tenderness.

Consider responsibility—seek aid of Holy Spirit—let love of Christ be supreme—then Prov. xxxi. 28.

### THE CONSUMMATION OF THE BELIEVER'S GLORY.

"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."—Rom. viii. 19—24.

Intend only to touch lightly on prominent topics.

Apostle dwells here on connection between present suffering and future glory.

Prospect obliterates sense of present evil.

A *παλιγγενεσία* anticipated ardently by elect, and prophesied in unconscious longing of nature.

A wonderful passage—point to three important truths.

### I. THE FINAL CONSUMMATION OF BELIEVER'S SALVATION.

vs. 19 and 23.

Language framed on usages of Roman law. Adoption.\*

Natural in a primitive community struggling for existence.

\* Smith's Biblical Dictionary. Art. Adoption.

Practice sanctioned by legislation.

Twofold, *private* when design formed, *public* when youth enrolled in the Forum.

In former sense believer already. 1 John iii. 1. Rom. viii. 16.

Adopted into God's family, recognizes God's fatherhood. John i. 12, 13.

Consciousness of right to privileges, v. 17.

Title made good, so that in this sense adoption secured.

But higher good anticipated.

New birth designed to fit for Is. lxxv. 17.

Regeneration of the individual, preparatory to that of creation.

Then Christ's kingdom established, in development of resurrection life.

To this, *text* refers—two epithets employed.

(1.) "Manifestation of sons of God."

Legal act of adoption published.

Many believers now despondent, or inconsistent, or poor and overlooked.

But *then* divested of badge of shame, clothed with white robes.

Every trace of corrupt nature purged away.

Even of Christ said "this day have I begotten thee."

So of His people, counterparts of Himself. 1 John iii. 2.

(2.) "The adoption," and "the redemption of the body."

Full blessings of adoption at general resurrection.

Bodies redeemed from grave.

The resurrection completes "the manifestation" for then entire man glorified.

This, the crowning privilege of Christianity.

Then kingdom of Christ established, His people kings and priests, His Church absolutely supreme.

## II. THE SYMPATHY OF CREATION WITH THE BELIEVER'S SALVATION AND GLORY.

Take "creature" to mean irrational world. (Alford.)

See p. 19 and 20, where "unwillingness" ascribed, but man a voluntary agent.

Adam "not deceived," sinned knowing consequences.

Creation fell with him, though not consenting to his act.

So also in v. 21, "creature itself," not man.

It is this which longs for man's restoration.

Bring out full meaning of ἀποκατάστασις.

Royalty of saints, signal for overthrow of evil.

Creature now tyrannized over and abused, then restored.

As Psalmist in Ps. cxlviii. 8—10, so apostle here.

At nuptials of prince whole country echoes with joy.

But more, creation urges forward believer's glory.

V. 22. As woman in travail.

Groans of creation incessantly uttered.

All physical and social convulsions birth-pangs of creation, to be intensified.

So Christ intimates. Comp. Matt. xxiv. 8 with 1 Thess. v. 3.

Assigns three reasons.

(1.) Because of its present state "subject to vanity."

Bowers of Paradise exchanged for thorns.

World dying of consumption—"all flesh grass."

(2.) "Subject not willingly."

If so natural to embrace opportunity of shaking off yoke.

(3.) Subjected not in despair but "in hope." v. 21.

Thus if man's fall written in creation, so future glory.

God says to sinners, you stand condemned by sons of God, and by travailing creation.

### III. THE STATE OF EXPECTATION IN WHICH BELIEVERS ARE NOW. v. 23.

What man capable of, to be learnt from Scripture.

Works wrought under Holy Spirit's influence.

Yet as nothing to future achievements in eternal kingdom.

Firstfruits implying { (1.) a foretaste.  
(2.) a pledge of harvest.

Yet burdened "groan." 2 Cor. v. 2 and 4.

Sense of indwelling sin.

Tasted of liberty, but yet a nobler goal, therefore sense of restriction.

"Jerusalem, my happy home,

Name ever dear to me,

When shall my labours have an end

In joy, and peace, and thee?"

Have you the first fruits of the Spirit?

Do you feel the burden of sin?



## THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND.

"And He spake a parable unto them ; Can the blind lead the blind ? shall they not both fall into the ditch ?—Luke vi. 39.

Variation in two reports of Sermon on Mount.

Accountable, from independent writers differently situated.

Matthew a listener, gives detailed account as originally spoken.

Luke learned it from report, and gives only an abstract.

Both inspired as to what they inserted and omitted.

Passages omitted by Luke inserted elsewhere in his Gospel.

Christ's teaching no doubt consisted in frequent repetitions.

The Lord's Prayer in chap. xi. Compare also ch. xii. 22—31.

St. Luke inserts other sayings as *text*, also in Matt. xv. 14.

**I. A PITEOUS SPECTACLE.**

Christ's illustrations true to nature.

"Blind leading blind" how familiar, yet they find their way.

But far more piteous in case of spiritually blind.

Former conscious of misfortune, latter not.

Former grope with hands, latter volunteer as guides.

Carnal persons dogmatize confidently on religious subjects.

Take counsel with evil heart, fortify selves by conferring with others.

God's language, Is. xxx. 1.

Mark of last days. 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

Impatience of sound doctrine manifested now.

Go a-field after false teachers.

But blind disciples responsible for blind leaders.

What are special characteristics of spiritual blindness.

**(1). Neglect of the study of God's word.**

Neglect of this is to be ignorant of Christ.

Then whether your Minister is faithful or unfaithful, he will be equally a blind leader to you.

**(2). Neglect of prayer.**

These ordinances of grace fail to profit.

Find fault with preacher, whereas it is their own.

**(3). An impatience of ministerial rebuke and remonstrance.**

Opposition to office as laid down. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

Their language. Is. xxx. 10.

Then, spirit of censoriousness and arrogance cherished.  
Captious critics who forget, v. 37.

The Minister's usefulness depends on hearer's attitude.  
If regard his preaching as incentive to study of Scripture.  
If pray for him, and if exhibit meekness, he will not be "a  
blind leader of the blind."

But apply more widely to present state of Church.  
Torn by contending factions, false teachers.  
Whose fault? Some say the Clergy, others the Bishops.  
Suggest truer cause. Jer. v. 30, 31.  
Leaders only exponents of views of followers.  
Laity responsible for teaching of Clergy.  
Let them insist on teaching set forth in the recent judgments  
being adhered to, and get rid of "blind leaders."

## II. A CALAMITOUS RESULT.

This result certain in case of Scribes and Pharisees.  
As builders rejected stone.  
The ditch yawning already, but they said "are we blind?"  
So constantly occurring.

"Voice of people the voice of God," so think no mistake.  
Flatter selves must be accepted by Judge.  
When sinner dies, friends say he is gone to heaven.  
But what evidence have they?  
At last it is their turn to "fall into ditch."

Christ insists on one indispensable requisite. John iii. 3.  
Not here in so many words.  
But *text*, vs. 42, 43, and 49 all presuppose it.\*  
In vain try to do good, till you become good.  
Till then blind, though you say "we see."

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## ORPAH AND RUTH.

"And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her."—Ruth i. 14.

A touching beauty about the story of Ruth.  
Contrast book of Judges, and that of Ruth.  
Relates how a Moabitess broke through the barriers of  
exclusion.

Narrative familiar—Naomi's position most forlorn.

\* *Vide Lange* on St. Luke, vol. i. p. 218.

A widow indeed—returns to Bethlehem.  
 Nothing to offer her daughter-in-law, v. 11, 13.  
 Reasoning sufficient for Orpah, but not so Ruth. *Text.*  
 Type of two classes in Christ's visible Church.

## I. CLASS REPRESENTED BY ORPAH.

Satan among the sons of God. Job i. 6.  
 Intrudes armed with a passport which cannot be disputed.  
 What is it? Worldliness in hearts of worshippers.  
 Exercises right as Prince of this world. John xiv. 30.  
 Worshippers' hearts are treacherous, and thoughts wander.  
 Yet all outwardly appear alike, serious and devout.  
 Like Orpah and Ruth, manifest similar tokens of affection.  
 But searcher of hearts sees distinction.  
 We ought to be faithful and honest each one with himself.  
 Minister may judge of spiritual condition, and must point  
 out evidences of worldliness.

### (1.) See it evidenced in impulsive Christians.

Usually the younger portion of the congregation.  
 Feelings easily aroused, *e.g.* by powerful sermon.  
 Pastor interested in them, as Paul was in Timothy, "being  
 mindful of thy tears"—the tears of a young convert.  
 Ready to offer selves for any service. Matt. xxix. 16.  
 But apt to forget that Christianity is a life-long warfare.  
 Not sat down and counted cost.  
 Enthusiasm expends itself in tears as Saul's. 1 Sam. xxiv. 16.  
 Remember, sentimentality is not Christianity.

### (2.) See it evidenced in irresolute Christians.

Sat long under gospel—assented to its truth.  
 Yes, they say it is all quite right.  
 But good resolutions vanish like "morning cloud."  
 How many such,

"In all the magnanimity of thought  
 Resolve and re-resolve—then die the same."

They have no decision of character.  
 Here is a young man shrinking from confirmation.  
 Here is one of mature age shrinking from the Lord's Table.  
 Where gospel is faithfully preached, how conscience must  
 smite these Orpahs with reproach.

## (3.) See it evidenced in formal Christians.

The most unsatisfactory of all.

Their moral conduct, it is true, is unexceptionable.

But their religious profession only an empty formalism.

They are the stony ground hearers.

Encased in worldliness as in armour, no spiritual artillery can penetrate.

In vain alarm consciences or soften hearts. Ps. lviii. 4.

May the Lord open their eyes.

**II. THE CLASS REPRESENTED BY RUTH.**

Association with Israelites had opened Ruth's eyes.

Saw their superiority over Moabites.

Possessors of a divine revelation into which she searched.

Her assurance in v. 10 different from Orpah's.

With Naomi all that she valued was bound up, v. 13, 14.

Illustrates spirit by which believers are animated.

They see vanity of world—learned value of Jesus.

Taught by the Spirit of God.

While formal professors stand at palace gate, they are introduced to the king.

Cleave to Jesus as disciples. John vi. 68.

Regard all they have as consecrated. Comp. 2 Cor. viii. 2-5.

There is no hypocrisy in such conduct.

Ask ourselves what is the nature of our religious profession.

Immoral persons usually withdraw from assemblies of God's people.

But some indulge in sin secretly, yet frequent sanctuary.

How can they find enjoyment?

Remember object for which Christ died. Titus ii. 14;

Rom. xii. 1.

**THE BELIEVER'S SECURITY.**

"And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"—1 Pet. iii. 13.

Tone of practical good sense pervading this epistle.

Peter not a learned man, Acts iv. 13.

Yet not illiterate, for Jonas not a very poor man.

Acts iv. 13, means, not learned in Schools of Rabbis.

Elementary schools to which Jews sent children.

His practical character developed by his occupation.\*

His Epistle bears evidence of this, especially *text*.

Writing to Hebrew Christians "scattered."

In danger from Greeks and Jews.

How disarm malice, but by consistent well-doing?

In every age, Christian prudence in *text*.

# I. THE CHRISTIAN'S WALK DECLARED. "Followers of that which is good."

Two versions of word in original.

(1.) "Zealous." A favourite word with Jews.

But not zealous of good, explained by St. Paul. Rom. x. 2.

Zeal of unenlightened bigots, as Jehu's.

So with professing Christians.

Religion made a mask, so casting a stumbling-block.

Worthless profession if not ask, "is it right?"

Zeal for God must be practical, Titus ii. 14.

(2.) "Imitators." Prone to imitate.

Evil practices rife, for sin easily copied.

Copy failings, instead of generous qualities.†

But "imitators of good" wherever find it.

Thus rise to highest source of good.

Need to study God's Word.

Here precepts of a holy life stored up.

Here breathe a different atmosphere.

Good here illustrated in lives of holy men.

In them, goodness shown to be possible.

Let their light shine out into night of ungodliness.

"Men of like passions," but strengthened by grace.

That grace as free for us.

In Scripture see royal road, discern footprints of "glorious company of Apostles, &c."

Not forget the dross in their gold, therefore 1 Cor. xi. 1.

Are we doing this?

Current of world deep, say, we must do as world does.

But God says, Exod. xxiii. 2, and Matt. vii. 13.

The Christian must come out of world.

Imitate good when obey command, Matt. xi. 29.

\* Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Art. "Peter."

† Leighton's Commentary in loco,

## II. HIS SAFEGUARD SUGGESTED. "Who will harm you."

A beauty in goodness which renders it attractive.

St. Peter wrote when cry frequent, "the Christians to the lions."

But as heathen brought into personal intercourse with them, respect for them increased.

Their inoffensiveness impel them to respect, and protect them.

This feeling stronger in a Christian country.

A consistent believer always respected.

But yet consistency no defence against world's malice.

It was said of the Master "away with Him."

So of His followers, John xv. 19.

But as imitators of good, malice at a loss, except in religion.

So Dan. vi. 5.

St. Peter not lose sight of this, v. 14, ch. iv. 15, 16.

Yet *text* still true.

Christian unharmed to the last, though Rom. viii. 35, 36.

His soul in safe keeping, so that "enemy not do him violence."

Periods familiar to believer when question of *text* recurs.

Archers may grieve him but Gen. xlix. 24.

Be it your wisdom to act thus.

"The course of this world" disturbed, but "the Lord reigneth."

His people are those who have embraced Christ.

People say "it is all for the best," but Rom. viii. 28.

"Imitators of good" shall enjoy "godly quietness."

Seek interest in Christ and then Deut. xxxiii. 27.

## THE GOSPEL NET.

"And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake."—Luke v. 5, 6.

Spiritual significance about this miracle, perceptible even to the disciples.

Here Christ unveils His Godhead.

Narratives of calling of the four disciples furnished by Matthew, and Mark, would be incomplete without this story.

This shows how successful fishermen they can become.  
 Fraught with special instruction for Christian ministers.  
 Simon's reply the response still of faithful ministers.

## I. PETER'S PAST DISCOURAGEMENT.

These words betray sense of weariness, &c.

Peter and his companions intelligent men, cunning craftsmen.

A successful fisherman knows habits of fish, haunts, kind of bait to allure, best instrument of capture, conditions of weather, &c.

Here fishing by night, yet spite of skill, *text*.

These words suggestive, with reference to

(1.) Epoch at which they were spoken.

The night of ignorance long shrouded the world.

Efforts made to dispel it by unaided human genius.

Complaint of *text* an echo of despairing heathen utterances.

Shared by inspired Jewish prophets. Rom. x. 21; Jer. xiii. 23; Hos. iv. 17.

A mightier agency needed; the Master must appear.

To times of ignorance belongs complaint of *text*.

(2.) Character of Christian Ministers.

Often compelled to use this humiliating confession.

Faithful minister will make good use of natural gifts.

Will adapt himself to peculiarities, watch opportunity, use powers of persuasion as St. Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 19—23.

But danger of relying on his own powers, &c.

Proneness to trust in man exhibited even by those who fully subscribe to 1 Cor. iii. 6.

Then come disappointments, the confession of *text*.

Many circumstances conspire to produce this at present.

The ship of the Church rides on a troubled sea.

“For not upon a tranquil lake  
 Our pleasant task we ply,  
 Where all along our glistening wake  
 The softest moonbeams lie;  
 Where rippling wave and dashing oar  
 Our midnight chant attend,  
 Or whispering palm leaves from the shore  
 With midnight silence blend.”\*

\* The Christian Year.

No, Jeremiah furnishes a truer picture, Jer. xx. 10.  
 Under such taunts, is it wonderful the Church should gird  
 up herself for fresh efforts.  
 Hence impatience of simple preaching of Word—recourse to  
 other agencies.  
 Church congresses, &c., with others more questionable, *e.g.*,  
 ritualistic services.  
 May flatter herself she is exhibiting zeal for God.  
 But the question is, what impression is she making on  
 profane world without, *text*.

## II. HIS PRESENT CONFIDENCE. "Nevertheless at thy word," &c.

This not language of one hopeless of success.  
 Peter had been for some time under special course of train-  
 ing.  
 He had been previously introduced to Christ by Andrew.  
 The good seed then left by Christ to germinate.  
 Here Jesus addresses him as a previous acquaintance.  
 While thrilling with enthusiasm under Christ's words, Jesus  
 utters His command, v. 4.  
 Peter flings to the winds his former misgivings, and says  
*text*.

Yes, "At thy word," the watchword which rekindles  
 courage.

Sense of our own unworthiness in preaching gospel.  
 Needs an angel's tongue, while our "speech contemptible."  
 Well does the apostle speak of "the foolishness of preach-  
 ing."

The contempt of preaching as a divine ordinance unabated  
 in the present day.

But happily, we can stay ourselves on the Word of Him  
 who has sent us forth.

His charge to us is Ezekiel ii. 7.

Need have no misgivings as to the result ; Jer. xxiii. 29.

Though results as yet unseen, yet we labour on, believing  
 promise. Is. lv. 11.

Our duty to preach the Word, &c.

So with you as witnesses for Christ, duty to witness a good  
 confession.

One says, I am too young to be a Sunday-school teacher.

Another, I cannot act with consistency, &c., &c.

Betrays inadequate comprehension of authority conferred  
 upon you by Christ's Word, else you would say *text*.



**III. HIS SUBSEQUENT REWARD. v. 6.**

This the invariable result when net let down in faith.

Need not inquire whether this a result of Christ's omniscience, or omnipotence.

A phenomenon often repeated in history.

Continually taking place though unseen by us, for process of conversion not external.

Even now cheered by results, but reserved for day of manifestation of sons of God.

Then a great multitude which no man can number.

Have you been enclosed in the gospel net?

Is Christ's Word precious to you?

**DAVID AND GOLIATH.**

"Then said David to the Philistine, thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."—1 Sam. xvii. 45.

History of Israel full of remarkable Divine interpositions.

The Philistines at this time were formidable enemies.\*

Isolated attempts to repel them made by Sampson.

Organized national efforts under Eli and Saul.

Here a fresh inroad—their champion Goliath.

Consider spirit in which champions engage.

**I. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH GOLIATH ADVANCES. "Thou comest to me, &c.**

These words reveal formidable character of David's foe.

Goliath a striking embodiment of brute strength.

How carefully sacred annalist describes his armour.

In his sword and spear and shield, much to warrant giant's confidence.

No doubt as to his success in the duel.

An illustration of carnal confidence. Observe, it is:

\* Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. Art. "Philistine."

**(1.) Plausible in appearance.**

Viewing forces at his command, man flatters himself he is invincible.

Has confidence in elements of success furnished by creature. Hence God's government ignored—"Providence is on the side of the strongest battalions," a saying of the first Napoleon.

Like Goliath, he trusts in sword and spear and shield.

Wise man glories in wisdom, rich man in riches, &c. Habbak. i. 16.

**(2.) Mischievous in its tendencies.**

Plausibility of carnal policy lies entirely on the surface. Folly of leaning on the creature, is continually illustrated. Its tendency is to alienate man from God.

Hence Jer. xvii. 5. Here see grounds of quarrel God has with creature confidence.

This confirmed by a review of carnal men's reasonings.

How false and perverted are their conceptions of God!

How indulgent are they, to their own and others' vices!

How unscrupulously they wrest Scripture to their own purposes!

How wilfully they speed along the downward road!

In vain does God appeal in word, and by His ministers.

**(3.) Ruinous in its results.**

How solemn Apostle's warning, Eph. v. 6.

A terrible recompence in store when God makes inquisition for sin.

That recompence often meted out in this life.

Weapons of carnal man's confidence often wrested by God to his destruction.

Witness Asahel's speed—Ahitophel's wisdom—Absalom's hair.

These warn us not to trust in sword, or spear, or shield. v. 47.

## **II. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH DAVID ADVANCES.** "But I come to thee, &c."

These words reveal secret of the stripling's courage.

David foolhardy, as judged by carnal sense.

But communion with God in the desert taught him a secret.

Therefore offers himself, not as a soldier, but as a priest, like Samuel, chap. xv. 33.

Conviction of God's presence gives him three important advantages.

(1.) *It reveals to him what is his wisest course.*

As Israel's champion, Saul was anxious he should succeed. Lends him his armour—wishes him well through the ordeal. And David fancied it might help him—"he assayed to go." But these not the weapons of his warfare—only a sling and stone.

Sees his success must depend, on correctness of aim, and agility of his movements.

Reminds us of tiny English ships assailing huge galleons of the Spanish Armada.

That policy taught him by Divine wisdom.

(2.) *It infused serenity and confidence into his mind.*

Language of one confident in God's omnipotence.

His memory reverts to previous positions of peril. vs. 34, 36. His confidence in God's unchangeableness not lessened, by perceiving that Goliath was a more dangerous foe than lion or bear.

God's past deliverances prompt us to trust Him in future.

1 Cor. i. 9, 10.

(3.) *It imparted strength to his arm.*

Never did his muscular arm hurl stone with such hearty good will.

"In the name of the Lord will I destroy him," was his sentiment. Ps. cxliv. 1.

Like Joseph, "the arms of his hands were made strong."

Gen. xlix. 24.

That duel recorded for our encouragement.

Goliath a type of Satan.

We have no difficulty in perceiving where our strength lies.

Not use the untrustworthy weapons of human learning, &c.

2 Cor. x. 4.

Satan distinguished by subtlety, but 2 Cor. ii. 11.

A favourite device to beget doubt of possibility of pardon.

But believers, though conscious of sin, can say Micah vii. 8.

They use the sling of God's word—hurl its promises against

Satan, and thus Rev. xii. 11.

What do you know of this victory ?  
 Alas ! how many, like Saul, shrink from the conflict,  
 They have never taken sling and stone of faith, prayer, or  
 God's word.  
 Now in the name of Jesus arise and go forth.

With my sling and stone I go,  
 To fight the Philistine ;  
 God hath said it shall be so,  
 And I shall conquer sin.  
 On His promise I rely,  
 Trust in an Almighty Lord,  
 Sure to win the victory,  
 For He hath spoke the word.

In the strength of God I rise,  
 I run to meet my foe,  
 Faith the word of power applies,  
 And lays the giant low ;  
 Faith in Jesu's conquering name,  
 Slings the sin-destroying stone,  
 Points the word's unerring aim,  
 And brings the monster down.\*

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### THE DEBT OF LOVE AND SERVICE.

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."—Matt. v. 23, 24.

"Love one another," the constant precept urged by John.  
 "God is love," the most complete definition of the Divine Being.

That love evidenced in Christ's atonement. 1 John iv. 10.  
 That example of love must be imitated by believers.  
 As creatures formed for society, our law is Phil. ii. 4.  
 Attention to this law would diminish the catalogue of human miseries.

But alas ! selfishness prevails, losing sight of a neighbour's interest.

In drawing near to God the baseness of selfishness is exposed.  
 1 John iv. 20.

Therefore our Lord's command is *text*.

\* John Wesley.

**I. THE CASE SUPPOSED.**

“To compass God’s altar” man admits to be a duty, binding upon him as a dependent creature.

Admitted alike by the Jew and the Christian.

The brazen altar no longer exists, but the call to dedicate ourselves to God ever in force.

How shall we secure His acceptance of our offering?

By coming through Christ, our great High Priest.

In doing so, we must remember that worship of God, and duty to man are combined.

To forget the latter makes our worship a mockery.

Thus taught two important lessons :

- (1.) That in drawing near to God, we should consider well what we are doing.

“Rememberest,” very significant?

It implies consideration—self-examination, &c.

Solomon’s advice is Ecc. v. 1, 2.

Like Moses we must “put off our shoes.”

Consider Him with whom you have to do.

- (2.) That in thus drawing near, we shall not fail to realize a sense of personal guilt.

Here God refreshes souls of His people. Ps. lxxiii. 2.

Here communications of Divine grace made.

Here contrast between God’s holiness and our sinfulness forces itself on attention. Job xlii. 5, 6.

Here actions sanctioned by world are condemned.

Even believers, influenced by world, give a brother cause of complaint.

But in coming to God’s altar “then,” if ever, He will “remember.”

How suggestive is this word “ought” of trifling causes of offence.

Minute though they may be, they plead before a God of justice.

We feel this, where I and my injured brother kneel together.

Apply petitions in Litany as tests of personal neglect.

In proportion to sensitiveness of our conscience, will the word “ought” widen its signification.

**II. THE CONDUCT PRESCRIBED. v. 24.**

Nothing defective in precepts of Christ.

Corrupt human nature runs into extremes.  
 Not so our Lord. Illust. Matt. xxiii. 23.  
 So here, charges to suspend, not neglect duty to God.  
 Again taught two important lessons.

(1.) That the debt of love is more important than the debt of service.  
 Duty to keep out of debt, but one kind of debt can never  
 be liquidated. Rom. xiii. 8.  
 Pride refuses to acknowledge itself in the wrong.  
 Their holy duties unacceptable to Him who says, Hos. vi. 6.  
 Ps. xxvi. 6. This the duty of every Christian.  
 We may ourselves have reason to complain, but Mark xi. 25.  
 But if our brother has "aught" against us, we are like Cain,  
 if obstinacy makes us lose sight of love.  
 We must liquidate debt of love, to be fitted to discharge  
 debt of service.

(2.) That it is inexcusable to neglect either.  
 "Go" from God's altar, from God's presence.  
 How painful for one who has come in the spirit of Ps. xlii. 2.  
 Would he not feel like the leprosy-stricken Uzziah?  
 Would he not hasten to perform the neglected duty?  
 But others might regard this as a license.  
 Worldly engagements urged as excuses for complying with  
 Christ's demands.  
 Provocations of temper, &c., urged for neglecting Lord's  
 table.  
 But no right to neglect—"then come and offer gift."  
 Apply the subject.

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### DEATH AND LIFE IN CHRIST.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."—Rom. vi. 8.

Christ came to make us "partakers of the Divine nature."  
 Death and life are subjects familiar to our every day's  
 experience.

Death the foe of life, and yet it is also its precursor and  
 source.

As it is in physical existence, so it is in spiritual.

A death unto sin, issuing in a nobler life, v. 9.

As with Christ, so with believers, *text*.

**I. A CONDITION.**

Hypothetical form employed.

Paul is replying to false conclusion drawn from doctrine of gratuitous justification.

This would contradict first principles of Christianity. v. 3.  
Baptism proclaims our identification with Christ, and therefore our separation from sin.

What necessitated the death of Christ? Sin—v. 10.

He entered into the experience of sinners.

In laying down life, He acquiesced in judgment of God on sin of man.

Thus, in effect, He “put away sin,” as if it had no existence.  
Before His death, Satan might hope to overcome weakness of His humanity, but impossible after.

Into this experience, the believer is initiated in baptism.

Testifies to the destruction of the power of sin.

See, what is expected from baptized Christians. v. 11.

Sin assails you continually—you yield to it.

Sin’s potency over you, a proof of non-identification with Christ in death.

How many thus deceive themselves.

Let obligations of baptismal covenant be recognized by you.

If partakers with Christ, reign of sin must be broken. Gal.  
v. 24.

**II. A RESULT.**

Death not cessation of existence to Christ and His people.

“We believe” from careful consideration and review.

Furnishes consolation—reveals our true condition.

Union with Christ imparts life.

Life of grace on earth and of glory in heaven.

(1). Christians partake of life of grace here.

Their inquiry is, “what can I do for God”?

Gird themselves for the Master’s service.

A healthy life seeks for occupation for its energies.

Languor and apathy betray secret disease.

Believers will seek some channel of doing good.

A life of holy obedience only satisfactory test of our spiritual condition.

Instantaneous conversion, a doctrine much insisted on now.

We do not deny the doctrine.  
 Still, this test of the life must be applied.  
 Conversion is not merely a painful conviction of sin, followed  
 by joyous sense of relief.  
 These only its initial elements.  
 Life with Christ, and living in sin, incompatible.  
 It is the life which constitutes the believer.  
 Where life is, there is also growth.  
 Growth ensured by use of ordinances.  
 Where these neglected, there can be no real life.

(2). *They partake of life of glory hereafter.*

Our Lord's assurance to His disciples was, John xiv. 19.  
 He lives now in full enjoyment of glory.  
 He shares His honours and rewards with His people.  
 Try to conceive blessedness.

O think of that assembly !  
 Their beauty and their peace ;  
 Souls perfect, yet receiving  
 Love's infinite increase.  
 In full illumination,  
 Knowing as they are known,  
 The transitory ended,  
 And the imperfect flown.

Henceforward and for ever  
 They live, live unto God ;  
 He is their source their object,  
 Their light, and their abode.  
 As sea-flowers in the ocean,  
 As white clouds in the air,  
 He forms them, and expands them,  
 Is round them everywhere.\*

These are no fond anticipations doomed to be disappointed.

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#### THOU ART THE MAN.

"Thou art the man."—2 Sam. xii. 7.

A most dishonouring episode in David's history.  
 Up to this point we watch his career with pleasure.  
 Now the whole complexion of his life is altered.  
 The prophet Nathan sent to arouse him by a parable.

\* The name of Jesus, by C. M. N.



Text falls like a thunderbolt, Ps. li. i.

Capable of a much more extended application.

It teaches us :

## I. THE NATURE OF THE RECEPTION WE SHOULD GIVE TO GOD'S WORD.

The Bible full of warnings and threats as well as promises.  
We fancy these are not sins into which we are likely to fall.  
It contains histories of individuals, which many read as matters that do not concern them.

But Rom. xv. 4—errors of departed saints serve as beacons.

Conscience, if healthy will say *text*.

What though we have not sinned like David, yet 1 John iii. 15, Matt. v. 28.

Aim to receive preached gospel as a message from God.

Our aim to speak the truth in love on topics suggested, &c.

We speak in general terms—our “bow drawn at a venture.”

Your duty to particularize the message to yourselves.

Some apply sermon to their neighbours.

Others coldly criticize, and find fault with preacher.

Rather let conscience have full sway, *text*.

Then you will go home, a sadder and a wiser man, saying

Ps. li. 10, 11.

## II. THE SLOWNESS OF MAN TO PERCEIVE AND CONFESS HIS GUILT BEFORE GOD.

David was unconscious of his guilt for months.

Unconscious even that Nathan's parable could apply to him.

Pronounces the severe sentence of one who has not obtained mercy.

His conscience torpid—utters no reproach.

Only when *text* spoken, does he make confession.

This no strange or unusual occurrence.

Sin colours everything in world, like sun seen through fog.

Men feel no horror at sin. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

Follow every false guide, while reject Christ.

No room for serious thoughts, no desire to search hearts.

Content with formal profession, cry “Peace, peace.”

How shall these be convinced of sin? Only by message of mercy like Nathan's.

*Text*, like earthquake on Horeb, will prepare for still small voice saying v. 13.

Have you ever felt this? Or are you utterly indifferent?

Or worse, remember appeals of conscience, but now obdurate?  
Beware of lasting blindness. Rev. xxii. 11.

### III. THAT HOWEVER HIDEOUS THE REPRESENTATION MADE OF HUMAN NATURE, IT IS A TRUE PORTRAIT.

We can fancy reflections of David as he heard Nathan's story.

Can human nature be so lost to every sentiment of justice, &c.? False estimate of human nature taken by unenlightened persons.

*Text* shows himself a far more guilty wretch. Ps. li. 5.

So persons object to doctrine of man's total depravity.

They argue that our Ninth Article is a caricature, not a portrait.

Point to praiseworthy qualities distinguishing unconverted.

Think God's image in man tarnished, not destroyed.

Know nothing of plague of their own heart.

Scripture asserts that man is *dead* in trespasses and sin.

Picture child in a passion, bearing stamp of Cain on his brow.

To judge human nature by generous qualities exhibited would be as erroneous as to judge of the fury of the ocean, in the stillness of a summer's eve.

Man so corrupt that only God's grace prevents his working out his own ruin.

Ancient Greece and Rome prove this.

Progress in grace reveals our own sinfulness; Paul wrote himself "the chief of sinners."

You read Romans iii., and say what a libel on humanity.

But what right to say so? Suppose God should remove the fences of His grace.

Take the case of Hazeel, 2 Kings viii. 12, 13.

Do not indulge in proud fancies like the Pharisees.

Open Bible; read its assertions of man's sinfulness, then *text*.

Let these words sink into hearts.

The Judge will set aside excuses by which palliate sin.

Law written in conscience, Rom. iii. 19.

Excuses tend only to condemnation, Luke xix. 22.

In day of judgment conscience proclaim *text*.

Be found in Christ.

Seek Holy Spirit, that so not fear messenger of doom saying *text*.

## THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES.

"In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples unto Him and saith unto them," &c.

Mark viii. 1—9.

Closely resembles miracle of feeding the five thousand.

Hence cavillers assert it to be the same.

But refuted by Christ Himself. Matt. xvi. 9, 10.

Here uses two distinct words in describing "baskets."

There are also other points of distinction.

The scene of the miracles, different.

The time at which they were wrought, different.

The number of the people, and the provision at hand, different.

Lastly Mark specifies "grass" in chap. vi. 39, whereas here only "ground."

Yet the two miracles may be considered together.

We have here :

## I. THE COMPASSIONATE CARE OF JESUS. v. 1—3.

The multitude here typical of mankind at large.

We are famishing—need the Bread of Life.

These people's own provision spent, but looked to Jesus for supply.

Nor does He hide Himself from them though ch. vi. 31.

His compassion called forth by these people's simple-minded earnestness of purpose.

True, He does not need them, as He did His disciples.

Luke xxii. 28.

Still He reckons their following Him to their praise.

Proves Himself the same of whom it is said, Judges x. 16 (ult.)

And happily He continues still the same.

## II. THE UNBELIEF OF THE DISCIPLES. v. 4.

This question betrays strange want of consideration.

Their national history rich in records of God's power.

As believers in Jesus as the Messiah, they ought not to have been staggered.

Should have remembered how Ps. lxxviii. 19 was answered.

Should have remembered Numb. xi. 21, 22.

A miraculous supply of food no new thing in Israel, witness  
2 Kings iv. 42—44.

Besides they had witnessed the miracle of the five  
thousand.

Yet we exhibit the same kind of unbelief.

In each new difficulty, our treacherous memories forget  
former deliverances.

We fancy the wonders of God's grace are exhausted.

An evil heart of unbelief at work.

Though our lot in life may be hard, we ought to trust God,  
assured that piety and faith can never die of hunger.

Cares may overwhelm us, as we hear cry, Judges xvi. 9, but  
faith can reply Rom. viii. 37.

### III. THE SATISFYING FOOD PROVIDED.

Christ having first referred the multitude to the disciples,  
takes the case in hand himself.

Mark contrast between human perplexity and divine wisdom.  
The necessary food is within reach.

"No fiery wing is seen to glide,  
No cates ambrosial are supplied,  
But one poor fisher's rude and scanty store  
Is all He asks (and more than needs),  
Who men and angels daily feeds,  
And stills the wailing sea-bird on the hungry shore."

Commands to sit in orderly array, for 1 Cor. xiv. 33 & 40.

The power of Christ's word in ensuring order in vast crowd.

The late Duke of Wellington used to remark that few  
generals could march 10,000 men out of Hyde Park.

Yet, here no confusion, though an undisciplined mob.

Observe His solemn blessing of the loaves and fishes.

This the pivot on which the miracle turned. Comp.  
John ii. 2, 3.

Its result the multiplication of the food, Ps. cxlv. 15, 16.

Here the Son is providing over His own house.

These miracles unaccountable by human reason.

They suggest many profitable lessons—confine selves to two.

(1.) If you want nutritious food seek God's blessing.

Your viands may be scanty, but if Jesus is at your table  
you have One,

"Whose love can turn earth's worst and least  
Into a conqueror's royal feast."

The solemn blessing of meal ought never to be neglected.

1 Tim. iv. 5.

A table may groan with delicacies, yet its guests may imbibe poison.

(2.) **Jesus here providing Bread of Life.**

To this He directs attention of the people. John vi. 27.

How many profess to seek Him yet fail to partake of Him.

They neglect to seek blessing of Holy Spirit.

Seek His enlightening influence.

## JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION.

"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."—Rom. vi. 22.

The doctrine of "justification by faith only" misrepresented.

Humbling to the pride of the natural man, therefore disliked.

It is asserted that it encourages Antinomianism.

But v. 2, and then proceeds to show folly of this assertion.

He argues first from Christian baptism.

Then, from the nature of the believer's union with Christ.

Then, from the resurrection of Christ.

Lastly, from the connexion between justification and sanctification.

A contrast drawn between former and present condition.  
v. 21, 22.

## I. THE RESULTS OF JUSTIFICATION.

These are two.

Elsewhere He mentions other results.

Ch. v. 1, 2, 3-5, 9. But confine attention to *text*.

(1.) **Freedom from sin.**

Before conversion, the sinner is "under the law."

Knows of no salvation except by doing what the law requires.

This law implanted in man's nature, not merely Mosaic code.

Ever conscious of acting in opposition to convictions of what is right.

Feels it impossible to satisfy requirements of law.

It convicts of sin—makes him cry, ch. vii. 24.

Finds deliverance in cross of Christ.

There sees his sins laid on the sin-bearer.  
 There sees Divine justice satisfied. Ch. iii. 24, 25.  
 Finds yoke of sin broken. Ch. vi. 14.  
 Delivered from its guilt, its dominion, and its penalty.

(2.) **Made servants of God.**

No man can serve two masters.  
 The natural man has to be emancipated from Satan's  
 thralldom.  
 Till then, his good deeds not acceptable to God.  
 God looks less at act itself, as at motive which prompts.  
 Faith in Christ impels to a life of holy obedience.  
 Illustrated in parable of the two debtors.  
 The believer puts on Christ, wears His livery, walks after  
 example.  
 His language is Gal. ii. 20.

## II. ITS CONNEXION WITH SANCTIFICATION.

Two kinds of righteousness needed.  
 The righteousness of justification, which is imputed and  
 perfect.  
 That of sanctification, which is wrought out in the believer  
 but is imperfect.  
 Logically former precedes latter, but in point of time  
 coincident.  
 The two things must go together—there must be *fruit*.  
 God justifies the ungodly, but when justified he is no longer  
 ungodly. *Text.*

This a most important consideration.  
 Question recurs, am I a justified believer?  
 But where is the evidence of your being so?  
 Are you bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit?  
 We can thus correct erroneous opinions commonly  
 entertained.

(1.) **That St. Paul and St. James contradict each other.**

James guards Paul's doctrine from abuse.  
 He shows that if a man is justified, he must also be sanctified.  
 Both appeal to Abraham as an illustration.  
 In his case faith and works clearly combined.  
 So while asserting, ch. iv. 5, take heed to 1 John iii. 7.

- (2.) How can the judgment at the last day be according to works, since works are not the means of our justification.

The answer easy, arising out of what just said.

The believer is justified already through the merits of Christ. Practically sentence pronounced, long before day of judgment.

Comp. ch. viii. 1 with John iii. 18.

But then, justice of God will be clearly proclaimed to universe.

Believer's works will then prove reality of their faith.

Hence Paul himself strenuously urges to good works.

Titus iii. 8, and ii. 14.

A word on the last clause, "the end everlasting life."

There is a third kind of righteousness, that of glorification.

This the end of justification and sanctification.

These the three links of gold in the chain of grace.

The last follows directly from the first. Ch. viii. 30.

Influence of Holy Spirit not of a temporary character, John xv. 16.

## THE CHOICE OF THE TEMPLE BUILDER.

"And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father." 1 Chron. xxviii. 6.

The temple the central point of Jewish worship.

God's promise to choose a place to put His name there.

Till this fulfilled, a character of incompleteness given to national existence.

When finally decided at the threshing floor of Araunah, a tabernacle felt to be unseemly.

David alive to this. Ps. cxxxii. 4, 5.

Directs all his energies to its accomplishment.

Regards this as the crowning privilege of his reign.

But God rejects his service, *text*.

## I. THE CHOICE OF THE TEMPLE BUILDER.

Depict the scene when these words were spoken.

David's speech—its opening words, v. 2.

Expresses his acquiescence in God's will.

Felt himself to be only viceroy of mightier monarch.

Nothing capricious or arbitrary in choice of Solomon.

Nothing novel or unprecedented in it, vs. 4, 5.

Doubtless periods when David would have chosen otherwise—would have seen Absalom succeed him—but now content.

This unfettered exercise of God's absolute sovereignty constantly insisted on in scripture.

Complained of, as destroying man's free will and responsibility.

But be its effects what they may, if God has revealed it, we are bound to receive it. Rom. iii. 4.

Declared in facts of history, and in enunciations of doctrine.

The choice of Israel an illustration on a grand scale.

Refer to Rom. ix. 15, 16, as example of doctrine.

Frank reception of this truth conduces to beget humility and submission.

Study God's word for yourselves, that like David learn contentment.

However mysterious this doctrine, it is certain "He willeth not the death of a sinner."

Therefore Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Build up temple of your heart. Jude 20, 21.

Then know God has taken you in hand. 1 Cor. iii. 9.

## II. THE GROUNDS OF THAT CHOICE.

If God's sovereignty absolute, presumptuous to offer reasons for choice of Solomon.

But He furnishes reasons to justify His choice.

Solomon, a type of Christ, the true Temple builder.

Typical in his mental endowments, and relationship to David.

*Text* carries our thoughts to Ps. ii. 7.

Typical in world-wide dominion. Ps. ii. 8.

Typical in name Jedidiah. Matt. iii. 17.

True, Solomon an unworthy type, but so is every human type.

Not called now to consider his fall, but what constitutes him a type of Him who could say, John ii. 19.

Answer found, in peaceful character of his administration.

A profound significance in this, 1 Chron. xxii. 9.

His subjects needed attention undisturbed, to concentrate it on building.

No sound of axe or hammer heard;

"And thus in majesty sublime and noiseless pomp it rose,  
Fit dwelling for the God of peace; a temple of repose."



Appropriateness in this, for it was where God was to give peace.

Therefore a man of peace must build it.

All this fully realized in mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Prophecy and history point to Him, building up spiritual temple of peace.

Peace in Hebrew synonymous with health, implies perfect adjustment of functions of body.

Implies re-establishment of friendly relationship between God and man.

Then God literally and truly dwells in man.

Christ Himself the perfect realization of this. Col. ii. 9.

Breathed an atmosphere of peace—composure undisturbed.

Temple ever expanding, as He exerts spiritual gravitation on elect souls.

Incorporated in Christ, find truth of Is. xxxii. 17.

Foundation of temple laid in Christ's atoning work.

Destroyed enmity—introduced peace.

Diffuses peace through all chambers of temple. 1 Cor. iv. 16.

The temple advancing towards completion under Builder—stones hewn from nature's quarry, &c.

God watches with delight the Builder's skill. Is. xlii. 1.

Process going on in individuals. 1. Cor. iii. 16.

Are you conscious that you are the shrine of Deity?

Recollect the temple is not to be built in troublous times.

Where impure thoughts and sinful propensities, its walls crumble.

Place no impediment in the way of the great Architect.

Mistake in supposing enjoyment to be found in licentiousness.

The believer a king, who has found the secret of royalty in submission.

God sends crosses that He may dwell in contrite hearts.

Ask Him to deal thus with you.

#### THE TEST OF DIVINE SONSHIP.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God."—Rom. viii. 14.

Paul a powerful reasoner.

Discourses on subjects interesting to us all.

Not a teacher of a system of philosophy, but an earnest man who speaks from personal experience.

Ch. vii. a picture of his own internal struggles.  
 Could find no peace by obeying the law.  
 What thus learnt, left on record for us.  
 By the deeds of the law, no peace to be attained.  
 Must emerge into atmosphere of grace, for *test*.

## I. THE DIGNITY DESCRIBED. "Sons of God."

Men disposed to trace origin to some lofty source.  
 Greek heroes of antiquity feigned to be sons of god, or goddess.

Stature and courage supposed to be derived from parentage distinguished for similar qualities. Judges viii. 18.

But mankind can point to God as Father. Gen. i. 27.

'Though formed of dust, yet "sons of God."

But here in far higher sense.

"They" emphasized to distinguish from others, *e.g.* Jews.

As children of Abraham, rightly regarded themselves "sons of God."

But apostle points out that under the law they were in a state of pupilage, as servants. Gal. iv. 1—3.

Veil of Moses shrouded hearts—sons only prospectively.

Besides, manifested no filial love and obedience. Mal. i. 6.

God's name made contemptible. Rom. ii. 24.

Lost the characteristics of sons, nay, John viii. 44.

Sonship, then, involves likeness.

Where no resemblance of character to God, this relationship does not exist.

God has revealed Himself in His Word.

Nay more, has sent One who is an exact transcript of Himself.

No conceptions of God so accurate as those formed from Christ.

No father had ever so perfect a son. John v. 19.

Actuated by child-like spirit, which makes His Father His model.

Here then the true "Son of God," inheriting Father's nature, doing Father's will, &c.

This disposition He imparts to others. John i. 12, 13.

They are partakers of a new birth.

They set Jesus before them as their model.

They exhibit fruits of faith and love, and obedience.

These God can acknowledge as His true sons.

O that we may thus prove our right to the title.

**II. THE WAY BY WHICH IT IS ATTAINED.**

Under former dispensation no "sons" in proper sense.  
Reserved for Holy Spirit. *Text.*

We live under the dispensation of the Spirit.  
His gift the result of the glorification of Christ.  
Evidence of fulfilment of Christ's promise in existence of  
the Christian Church.

Important for us to understand nature of Spirit's working.

The word "led" implies gentle, persuasive influence.

Contrasted with severity of the law. Gal. v. 18.

His office "to testify of Christ."

An invisible preacher, discoursing of perfections of Jesus.

Enlightens understanding, and rectifies judgment.

Applies truths of Word to consciences.

Thus His influence compared to dew.

His leading an essential element in true Christian  
experience.

No natural causes can produce Christian manhood.

By Spirit adopted, v. 15 or Gal. iv. 3.

In that child-like cry there is true eloquence.

Believers go on from strength to strength.

Furnishes a personal test to estimate your condition.

If not "children of God" you are "children of the devil."

The influence of the Spirit a *sensible* influence, not a fancy.

Are you conscious of His drawing you from world?

Do you know His sin-convincing power? &c.

Are you yielding to His influence?

Till He begins His renovating work you are "in the gall of  
bitterness."

Not integrity &c. constitutes sonship, but *text*.

**DAVID'S HUMILITY AND PIETY.**

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer  
so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee and of thine own  
have we given thee."—1 Chron. xxix. 14.

David's love for God's worship. Ps. cxxii. 1.

But saw much to regret in mode of worship.

Tabernacle still shifted from place to place.\*

Its sacred character sullied; high places multiplied.

\* Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. Art. Tabernacle.

The ark no longer enshrined in it.

A kind of rival tent set up on Zion, operating injuriously on spiritual life of nation.

Unable to remedy this in early part of his reign.

Now that he was "at rest," sought to promote unity of worship.

Contrasted his own palace, Ch. xvii. 1.

But if not permitted to build, he could make preparation.

Two things engaged his attention.

(1.) *Choice of site.* No little anxiety, Ps. cxxxii. 1—5.

But God answered. Ch. xxi. 18.

Proper place at Gibeon, but Ch. xxi. 29, 30.

God's acceptance of sacrifice spoke volumes. Ch. xxii. 1.

(2.) *Collection of materials.*

Here surveys store, song of praise.

Confine attention to the verse where see.

## I. DAVID'S HUMILITY. *Text.*

Sternness in worldly men's dealings,—exact legal due.

"Business is business," means Matt. xviii. 28.

When relax grasp, applaud themselves for generosity.

This extends up to God; consider God their debtor.

But true Christian will be humbled at own unworthiness.

God confers honour in making us "fellow labourers."

How little we can do for Him!

He has no need to solicit our aid.

"God doth not need

Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; His state  
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait."\*

If we can do more than "stand and wait," be humble and thankful.

We are "unprofitable servants."

But David rejoiced in "willingness."

This constitutes acceptable service, 1 Cor. viii. 12.

Constraint testifies to servility, hypocrisy, and secret hatred.

But here evidencing reality of spiritual life, Ps. cx. 3.

Milton.

"Willingness" supplies fair inference of regeneration.  
 Not safe always so to conclude, nor to rely on this solely.  
 Still where uncharitable, clear, no work of grace.  
 Ours must be a willing service.

Once more, union in God's service bound David and  
 his subjects more closely to each other. *Text.*  
 Many opportunities of testing loyalty, but Ps. xli. 9.  
 Had followed banner of Absalom.  
 Yet heart of nation beat true, returned to allegiance.  
 Now in promoting unity of Divine worship, found his own  
 royal authority strengthened.  
 This the experience of every faithful Christian pastor.  
 Mutual confidence between him and his people increased, in  
 proportion as learn more of power of Christ's saying, "It  
 is more blessed to give than to receive."

## II. HIS PIETY. *Text.*

This the foundation of their willingness.  
 All we possess, is the free gift of God.  
 The successful worldling may say as Dan. iv. 30.  
 But the Christian attributes success to God.  
 If so, it follows we should give Him of His own.  
 We are stewards for God.  
 Faithfulness required, else, Luke xvi. 2.  
 This, foundation of Jewish system of tithes.  
 Equally binding under Christian dispensation.  
 True, not under law with its severe rule.  
 But principles which the law inculcates were not capricious  
 temporary enactments, but fundamental verities.  
 Designed to serve as guiding principles for us.  
 Those who set aside a stated portion of income for God,  
 give cheerfully.  
 Their's a systematic beneficence, not impulsive, nor im-  
 patient as unjust judge.  
 Act thus, and no doubt as to genuineness of piety.  
 Apply, &c.

## SOLOMON'S REQUEST.

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this thy so great a people"—1 Rom. iii. 9.

Solomon's accession marks an important epoch.  
 David had established the monarchy on firm basis.  
 He had amassed vast treasures.  
 There were no intestine feuds—Adonijah's nipped in bud.  
 Men eagerly watched youthful monarch's first proceedings.  
 The beginning of his reign was most auspicious.  
 God appears to him in Gibeon, and says v. 5. Consider his response.

## I. ITS HUMILITY.

Solomon evidently alive to responsibility of his office.  
 He felt it was no light undertaking.  
 A despotic monarch exercises immense influence.  
 He was not like Ahaz, Is. vii. 12, for felt deficiency, v. 7.  
 This language raises Solomon in our estimation.  
 Reminds us of Sir Isaac Newton—

"I know not how I may appear to you, but to myself I seem like a little child picking up a few pebbles on the strand, while the great ocean of truth lies unexplored before me."

The truly great are lowly in their own eyes.  
 Paul asks, "who is sufficient for these things?"  
 Spirit-taught humility essential to a successful minister.  
 Solomon acted thus, Prov. iii. 5.

This we must cherish. Matt. xviii. 3.  
 Constitutes difference between Gospel method of salvation,  
 and that which carnal mind adopts.  
 Men say, I do my duty, therefore God will accept me.  
 Sinner is thus his own Saviour, and dishonours Christ.  
 He will find his mistake in that day. Is. ii. 17.  
 Obey 1 Pet. v. 6. Without this you are bankrupt, though  
 boasting of your riches.  
 When convinced of sin, see yourself a child. Is. lxvi. 2.  
 Distrust of self will make you cling to Christ.

"The mistakes of my life are many,  
 The sins of my heart are more,  
 And I scarce can see for weeping—  
 But I knock on the open door.

I am lowest of those who love Him,  
I am weakest of those who pray—  
But I come as He has bidden,  
And He will not say me nay."

## II. ITS WISDOM.

Some pocket emoluments of office, while neglect its duties.  
Solomon discerned his duty, and sought to fulfil it.

*Text*, the request of one "whose conscience is His King."

Office of a judge often a thankless one.

Yet men eager to exercise it, as Moses, Exod. ii. 14.

Easy for disaffected subjects to find fault.

So Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 4. Not so Solomon.

Asks not for "kingcraft" of James I. of England.

Israel's king must have a higher aim. Ps. cxix. 125.

These were the laws of his kingdom. Deut. xvii. 18, 19.

Solomon asked for spiritual insight.

We as subjects, elevated to royal dignity, need it also.

"He that trusts in his own heart is a fool." Jer. xvii. 9.

The law of the flesh directs sinner to his own undoing.

Neglects Scripture, does not seek aid of Holy Spirit.

Appeal, is it so with you?

Bible a sealed book to the slaves of sin.

We want guidance of Holy Spirit eminently in present day.

He energizes in the Church—His aid may be secured.

## III. ITS SUCCESS. v. 10.

Speech of one who desired to honour God in fulfilling duty.

Glory of God and good of man closely connected.

Hence his prayer prevailed. v. 11—13.

Solomon not destitute of ambition.

Desired to emulate deeds of his father.

Language of v. 11 implies this, but held in check by higher motive.

Thus secured what he secretly longed for. Matt. vi. 33.

Here learn secret of prevailing prayer.

Some don't pray at all—others complain prayer not heard.

But ask such what motive prompts their prayer?

James iv. 3, making mistake of not having heart conformed to Divine will.

Prevailing prayer only exercised by those guided by Holy Spirit.

Will of God conditional element of believer's existence.  
 When able to acquiesce, prayer acceptable. 1 John v. 14, 15.

Let subject convince you of God's willingness to hear.  
 He waits to be gracious.  
 Sense of guilt, &c., evidences of Spirit leading you.  
 His invitation to ask your warrant.

And dost Thou say, "Ask what thou wilt?"  
 Lord, I would seize the golden hour;  
 I pray to be released from guilt,  
 And freed from sin and Satan's power.

More of Thy presence, Lord, impart,  
 More of Thine image let me hear;  
 Erect Thy throne within my heart,  
 And reign without a rival there.

Give me to read my pardon sealed,  
 And from Thy joy to draw my strength,  
 To have Thy boundless love revealed,  
 In all its height, and breadth, and length.

In pleading thus, you will, like Solomon, be successful.  
 God is no niggard bestower of His gifts.  
 Take Jesus at His word.

#### CHRISTIAN POLICY.

"And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."—Luke xvi. 9.

The condition of the primitive church presents a beautiful picture.

The spirit of unity had destroyed selfishness. Acts iv. 32.

Alas! a rule of life that could not be persevered in.

Served only as a passing type of perfect harmony of heaven.

Socialism or Communism only its parody.

Such attempts based on forgetfulness of Deut. xii. 9.

Evidently not result of positive legislation of Apostles.

Acts v. 4.

Not persevered in for any length of time. Rom. xv. 26.

1 Tim. vi. 17.

Not designed by Christ as rule for church, clear from *text*.

Parable difficult of interpretation.

Main point is the steward's making provision for the future.

Meets the crisis with firmness and decision.

True the course he pursues is dishonest, but observe it secures for him friends.



Now Christ says contrast this unscrupulous hireling with the children of light.

Then pointing to his ingenuity, resolution, and activity, He says *text*.

We have set forth here Christian policy ;

## I. IN ITS NATURE. "Make to yourselves friends, &c."

Strange advice, to make friends of God's rival in human heart.

Hence, some say not true reading, and that a "not" must be inserted.

But we accept it as it stands, as we say Rom. iii. 4.

"Make friends by means of." Wealth a means to an end.

To lavish affection on it as on a human friend is to be a miser.

Christ here points to true purpose of creature gifts, and shows how make friends by this "mammon."

Why called "mammon" of unrighteousness."

Addressing Pharisees who were covetous.

Speaking generally, a sinful element in commerce. Ecclesiasticus xxvii. 2.

Mammon, the false god to which all more or less cling.

If so, then let us wash our hands of it altogether.

So mendicant fraternities of the middle ages acted.

Not so, says Christ, but *text*.

For as learn from dishonest steward a lesson of prudence, so use "mammon" to secure friends for eternity.

Christian conscious he is "not his own."

Asks, how shall I serve God in my day and generation.

Glory acquired from communion with God, will be reflected among men, as it was with Moses. Exod. xxxiv. 35.

True religion shown in life. James i. 27.

Many Christians like Bunyan's Talkative.

Such know how to make hirelings, and tools, but not friends.

He who would make friends must know how to win hearts.

Our wealth to be regarded as a talent, of which give account.

## II. IN ITS END, OR OBJECT. "That when ye fail &c."

The Christian has an eye to the future.

Time must come to all, when they must "fail."

Observe steward's conduct at this crisis.

No sanction here of doctrine of meritoriousness of good works.

Indebted for heaven to Him who says John xiv. 2.

We are justified by faith only. Article xi.

Yet faith works by love, and elect write their names in leaves of obedience here.

Mere hypocrites, if glory in doctrines of grace, while inoperative on life and conduct.

This steward laboured for an uncertainty.

Gratitude exerts no lasting influence on worldly minds.

If it did, it could only give him an obscure corner in a poor dwelling.

But how different with these "friends."

These "houses" too, are "sure dwellings," "quiet resting-places," "everlasting habitations."

Put your money to noble usury. Luke xii. 33.

Then, need fear no panic in money market.

Then if joy over sinner repenting, much more over saint glorified.

Yet one more strain of joy and triumph holy,  
For a new work achieved and victory won ;  
Another vessel in the haven anchored,  
Another warfare well and nobly done.

Yet one more flag is on the ramparts floating,  
Yet one more footstep on the crystal sea,  
Another harp has joined the "many waters,"  
Another soul the kingdom of the free.

White-robed spirits pressing forward to congratulate you.

You forget the little service, treasured up in *their* grateful hearts.

## THE SACRAMENTS OF THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat: and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."—1 Cor. x. i. 4,

The Law and the Gospel are one and the same.

The Law, like the Gospel, asserts that no justification by its means.

Christ alone, is its sum and substance.

The Gospel comes to us through "witnesses," to Israel it came through "prophets."

The apostles entered on prophets' labours.

The ancient Jews not saved by temporal promises.

"They without us could not be made perfect." Heb. vii. 19.

All this brought out here.

Fundamental doctrine of the Law was Deut. vi. 4.

At Sinai, Israel learned that God could only be approached through a Mediator.

In the one case, Moses was the Mediator, in the other Christ.

But "one God" a party to both dispensations, therefore distinguished by unity of design. Gal. iii. 19, 20.

Moses and Christ one, in the substance of their communications, for Deut. xviii. 15, and John v. 46.

Positions they occupy, set forth in Heb. iii. 5, 6.

Mosaic records not obsolete enactments; Christ may still be discerned in them.

Give up the Pentateuch to assaults of "the higher criticism," and you make Christ a liar.

Here learn, Christian and Jewish Sacraments, the same.

## I. BAPTISM.—vs. 1, 2.

Passage of the Red Sea a Sacramental transaction.

Constituted a bond of union between Jehovah and Israel.

It was administration of their oath of allegiance to their covenant God.

But it was more than a sign of the covenant,—it was an impartation of power to act up to its obligations, for Exod. xiv. 31.

The ratification of a promise they once could not believe. Exod. vi. 9.

This grace necessary, for they had not Abraham's faith.

They were a nation of escaped bond-slaves, shrinking from difficulty.

They were leaving a country, to which ever looked back with fondness.

They were ever exhibiting a murmuring, cowardly spirit.

Yet, even their craven hearts were excited by this proof of the Almighty's power.

Well for them, had they continued true, but alas! v. 5

Christian Baptism lays us under similar obligations.

Refer to first collect in Baptismal service.

In Baptism pledged to obey Christ, as Israel at Red Sea, to obey Moses.

As Red Sea sealed death of Israel to bondage of Pharaoh, &c., so Baptism seals believers.\*

We are like them, spiritually helpless, but Baptism is the token of our being linked to One "mighty to save."

Represents identity with Christ. Col. ii. 12.

Have you realized all this?

Are you, in Christ's strength, contending against sin?

If not, let the fate of ancient Israel put you on your guard.

## II. THE LORD'S SUPPER.—vs. 3, 4.

Manna designed peculiarly for the wilderness.

It was "spiritual meat;" provided in a remarkable manner.

Hence Jews regarded it as a spiritual mystery. John vi. 31.

Refer to Christ's reply and its conclusion. John vi. 35.

But the Jews had what answered to the other element.

The rock smitten by Moses.

No sanction of Jewish tradition that rock shifted from place to place.

Bread and water, were to them two standing ordinances.

The same lesson taught as in Baptism.

Christians may come regularly to Lord's Table, and yet perish.

A heavier condemnation on us—for we discern sacramental character of ordinance.

But there is another aspect of apostle's warning.

Careless coming to Lord's Table, is not what is likely to be your sin.

But how many serious-minded Christians abstain from coming altogether.

Would not Israel have starved had they refused to avail themselves of provision made?

What is the conclusion then? That you have no life in you.\*

Rest not content with the mere possession of privileges.

Labour to enter into rest of faith. Heb. iv. 1.

\* Fairbairn's Typology, vol. II. Book III. Chap. I. Sect. iv.

## SOLOMON'S FALL.

"His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father."—1 Kings xi. 4 (ult).

Solomon ascended throne under brilliant auspices.

With a noble presence, Ps. xlv. 2, superhuman wisdom, vast wealth, no rival, men hailed his accession. Ps. lxxii. 17 (ult).

Expectations fully realized at first.

But affable monarch degenerated into a soured despot.

Contrast between early and later period of his reign due to *text*.

## I. SOLOMON'S WORLDLINESS.

His position, one peculiarly susceptible to worldly influences. Only "a perfect heart" could be preserved unharmed there. World's fascination seductive even to awakened Christians. Solomon aimed at surrounding himself with accessories of splendour.

How fatally this operated, seen in two directions.

## (1.) In the administration of his government.

His first object to build Temple—rightly so.

Even here we detect worldly element—developing taste for magnificent architecture, and gorgeous ritual.

Built palaces, aqueducts, fortresses, cities.\*

Recourse to commercial enterprise, also to taxation and monopolies.

Became a slaveholder and a despot.

153,000 "strangers" sent to Lebanon—free-born Israelites liable to the conscription.

Contrast between his splendid tyranny and David. Ps. lxxviii. 72.

Same elements of worldliness operate upon us.

Men immerse selves in business pursuits.

Divine truths become obliterated—a hardening process supervenes.

Divine worship no longer enjoyed, or as Doeg. 1 Sam. xxi. 7.

A gorgeous ritual adopted to cheat soul.

\* Smith's Dict. of Bible, Art. Solomon.

Or if true to simplicity of worship, sit unmoved under sound of gospel.

Deaf to appeals and remonstrances. Matt. xi. 17.

Think how solemn is Apostle's warning. 1 John ii. 15—17.

Let Solomon's fate put you on guard, "choose good part."

(2.) *In his pursuit of forbidden pleasure.*

He resolved to suck sweets of pleasure from every cup.

Like Oriental despots, he must have his seraglio.

A violation of the Divine law. Deut. xvii. 16, 17.

Could not even say, he knew not the fatal consequences of such conduct.

Acted in opposition to his own warnings to Rehoboam.

Prov. v. 20, &c.

Became tool and slave of heathen women.

The beginning of sin is like the letting out of water.

When gratification yielded, fresh demands made.

Young hearts hard to be persuaded that the world is hostile to God.

The votary of pleasure is dead while he lives, witness Byron

"My days are in the yellow leaf,  
The flowers, the fruits of love are gone;  
The worm, the canker and the grief,  
Are mine alone."

True enjoyment not to be found in learned Egypt, or busy Sidon, or luxurious Moab, or rock-hewn Edom.

To be found in knowing God. John xvii. 3.

## II. HIS APOSTACY.

Influence of heathen wives gathered strength.

Why should not these ladies enjoy their own religious rites? Solomon said to be the earliest example of religious toleration.

But he abandoned fundamental principle, viz., the first commandment.

He became a heartless worldling, to whom one form of religion was as good as another.

False and true alike welcome, and alike indifferent.\*

Then God forsook him.

Then came trouble by means of Hadad, and Rezin, and Jeroboam.

\* Robertson's Sermon on Neh. xiii. 26, vol. IV.

How much instruction here for us.

Aim of the world to identify itself with the Church.

Much dangerous reasoning employed in present day.

Ball-goers, &c. may be very good christians, therefore should not be condemned.

The Church of Rome ought to be allowed every facility for making converts, &c.

Ritualists ought to enjoy unlimited license, &c.

All this opposed to 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Where unholy compromise permitted, apostacy is the result.

Offensive to God to tolerate and apologize for error.

It leads to religious indifferentism, like Pilate's. John xviii. 38.

God's anger is aroused. Hos. iv. 17.

It teaches two further lessons ;

(1.) **The feebleness of man.**

Prov. xxviii. 26. One who falls a prey to Satan.

Be it your wisdom to distrust yourselves.

A perfect heart is alive to its own feebleness. Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

(2.) **The faithfulness of God.**

God's covenant love followed Solomon. Ps. lxxxix. 30—33.

Book of Ecclesiastes his penitent confession.

That faithfulness available for us. 1 Cor. x. 13.

THE CRITERIA OF INSPIRATION.

"Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed ; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."—1 Cor. xii. 3.

Godliness the restoration of God to the soul of man.

Lost God's image in the fall. So Gentiles, v. 2.

In vain applied to heathen oracles.

Their ambiguous responses highly mortifying ; concluded all religion a deceit.

But when Christ came, made to perceive God could and did reveal Himself in and through man.

Miraculous gifts of Spirit proved Him no "dumb idol."

[The page contains several paragraphs of text that are almost entirely illegible due to extreme blurring and low contrast. The text appears to be organized into sections, possibly separated by horizontal lines or headings, but the specific content cannot be discerned.]



In unregenerate state, blessedness of spiritual life not appreciated.

Office of Spirit to quicken.

- (4.) **No man can testify to power of grace in His own soul, by maintaining doctrines according to Godliness, but by Spirit.**

Propensity of human nature to error.

Ignorance and sin, closely connected.

Truth must therefore not only be objectively revealed, but subjectively conveyed. Matt. xvi. 17.

Not only learned but held, and impossible, without Spirit.

## II. THE PRINCIPLE WHICH IMPELS MEN TO DENY CHRIST.

Some may say nothing to do with this, as no fear of anathematizing Christ as Jews, or primitive Christians, to escape persecution.

But ways of reproaching Christ.

- (1.) **When we depreciate His character, and misrepresent His offices.**

Claims to be our Redeemer, priest, prophet, king.

But professing Christians deny these claims.

Speak of Him as a good man, and faithful witness.

Thus make Him a liar, thief, deceiver, and blasphemer.

- (2.) **When we deny his authority.**

Christ having magnified law, writes it on hearts of His people.

But when men refuse to obey it, regard Him as anathema.

- (3.) **When we resist His grace.**

He stands with imploring gestures.

Rev. xxii. 17. But world's market full, while vineyard lacks labourers.

Prove that "not having Spirit of Christ, none of His."

Trust not so with you.

If you have received Spirit, your confession of Christ constant and consistent.

Show that Jesus is your Lord by taking up cross.

## LOVE'S GROWTH.

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."—1 John iv. 12..

John the apostle of love, though "a son of thunder."  
Dwells much on source of love, its characteristics and tests.  
Lays down principle, "God is love;" shows how it is illustrated in v. 10, and draws conclusion in v. 11.

Then follows an abrupt and apparently unconnected statement, v. 12 (1st part).

Now in v. 11 see an unexpected substitution (*vide* Alford).  
Why made, v. 20 will explain.

In our fellow men see images of God.

Thus assertion in v. 12 is the explanation of v. 11.

By this love, we prove the indwelling of God. *Text.*

We have here :

# I. A SUPPOSITION. "If we love one another."

We admire love, even in dumb animals.

The outgoings of affection are constantly displayed.

Why then this hypothetical form? Because he is <sup>not</sup> speaking of natural love.

This love may exist merely as a species of selfishness.

It is antagonistic to Christian discipleship. Luke xiv. 26.

It may be combined with forgetfulness of strangers.

The poet's picture alas too true :

Then Christ sought out an artizan,  
A low browed, stunted, haggard man;  
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin  
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.  
These set He in the midst of them;  
And as they drew back their garments' hem  
For fear of defilement, "Lo here," said He,  
"The images ye have made of me."\*

That men degrade their fellow men, warrants the Apostle in using this form.

Few love for Christ's sake—in Christ's name.

Such love consequence of experience of God's love in soul.

As love animated Christ, so we. Col. iii. 12, 13.

Our love must extend even to enemies.

Much more to "household and family of faith."

\* J. R. Lowell.

## II. A DECLARATION. "God dwelleth in us."

No man hath seen God at any time ; yet men impelled to feel after Him.

Conscious of a nature formed for enjoying Deity.

Though fallen, feel that happiness to be found in union with Him.

We see this evidenced in heathen mythology.

We see it in the Pantheistic utterances of modern poets.

This union with God not a fanciful dream—realized in Christ.

Makes His presence felt by Spirit, John xiv. 23.

Made partakers of Divine nature, v. 15.

Assured of reality of this union by Spirit, v. 13.

Then the fruits of the Spirit, and in forefront, love.

By love conformed to image of Christ.

Then secured more than Moses desired. Exod. xxxiii. 18.

## III. A CONCLUSION. "His love is perfected in us."

Not God's love to us, but our love to God.

Needs suitable sphere of action in which to exercise.

Wants a tangible visible object, for abstraction will never secure real love.

But "no man hath seen," therefore visible objects needed or love degenerate into sentimentalism.

Injurious effect of novel reading.

Emotions excited by unreal sufferings, hence becomes mere mawkish sentiment.

Weep over sorrows of heroine, while indifferent to real distress.

Love wants object, must go on to perfection or perish.

In men see images of God. Matt. xxv. 45.

Cultivate love of brethren.

Some love to discourse on religious topics, yet speak uncharitably of neighbours.

Some appreciate faithful preaching, yet refuse to assist in promoting God's glory.

Such Christianity worthless.

Love one another, not in word only.

## GOD'S WORD, VERSUS MAN'S WORD.

"And He said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee; neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place; for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, bring him back with thee unto thine house that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."—1 Kings xiii. 16—18.

Condition of Hebrew commonwealth as depicted here, a sad one.

An ominous cloud gathered round national horizon.

The rebellion of the ten tribes, and usurpation of Jeroboam.

His constitution of rival national sanctuaries.

Destroys religious unity by worship of idol calves.

At this juncture God interposes, as described here.

The unhappy fate of this man of God, is very instructive.

Try to give clue to old prophet's conduct.

Jeroboam's usurpation by this time a settled fact, so that people had to decide what ruler they would obey.

The tribe of Levi and all faithful Israelites migrated to the southern kingdom. 2 Chron. xi. 13—16.

At such a crisis, there would be many half-hearted persons, like this old prophet.

Withdrew from idolatrous worship of Bethel, but cultivated social intercourse with idolatrous neighbours.

Felt unworthiness of his position—grieved over gift of prophecy departed.

In this mood, hears of deeds wrought by the man of God.

Resolves to show his neighbours that he has an influence over him, which not even their king could exercise.

Indifferent to his fate, so long as his own pride is gratified.

The whole narrative teaches two lessons:

## I. THE SAFETY ENSURED BY IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD.

Peculiar phrase employed "by the word of the Lord."

The word of the Lord conceived as a power overshadowing prophet.

The man goes forth, without any doubts as to the nature of his commission.

The divine afflatus has breathed into his spirit.  
Jehovah who had spoken on Sinai, is making a further  
revelation by his means.

No credulous enthusiast, for substance of his message the  
same as that from Sinai.

The prophet himself needed to obey letter of his instruction.  
While doing so he was safe—the king's arm paralysed.  
Goes forth encircled by shield of omnipotence.

The same law holds good now.

God has spoken to us—Bible the revelation of His will.

Attention to it ensures safety. Ps. cxix. 9, 105.

As direct and powerful an authority over us, as over those  
to whom it was originally addressed.

Obedience to it ensures safety of the individual.

So a Christian Church must base its formularies upon it.

This the Church of England does. Article VI.

She even requires portions of it to be painted on walls.  
82nd Canon.

In Decalogue, Lord's Prayer, and Creed, you see a summary  
of your duty, your privilege, and your faith.

Here truth which ensures safety of congregation and  
minister. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

## II. THE RUIN CAUSED BY BEING BEGUILED BY MAN'S WORD.

Man's word invariably runs counter to God's word.

Hardly dares to fly openly in His face.

Pretends to respect His authority while evading it.

When this is the case, truth's beacon is dimmed.

Believers need to be on guard, lest beguiled. 2 Thess. ii. 10.

We see this illustrated in this narrative.

The man of God rejected Jeroboam's invitation.

Spurned it probably with something of Peter's indignation.

Acts viii. 20.

But the proposal made afterwards a different one.

Perhaps remembers hearing of this old prophet as one

"faithful among the faithless."

Here a dear brother in the Lord, with whom he may hold  
sweet communion.

Goes back to receive his death warrant at the hand of his  
betrayed.

Gives point to Apostolic warning. 1 Tim. iv. 1.

"Hypocrisy the homage which vice renders to virtue."

2 Cor. xi. 14.

False systems of religion distinguished by plausible resemblance to truth.

Pharisees zealous for law yet, Rom. ii. 23.

Popery professes to be the champion of God's truth, yet sets it aside.

Thrust out the 2nd Commandment from the Decalogue.

By distinction between mortal and venial sin, gives lie to

Christ's explanation of Decalogue, in sermon on Mount.

Ritualism sets God's word aside for traditions of men.

Systems ruinous to immortal souls.

But it may be said, you are uncharitable, for see how zealous and self-denying they are.

Answer, the question is not what do they do, but what do they teach.

Beware of false charity.

It is said, Christianity must advance with the age, Scripture receive more liberal interpretation, &c.

Satan's siren song, proclaiming that an angel has spoken, giving a message contradicting "the old, old story."

Stand fast by God's word. 1 Pet. i. 24, 25.

### THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.

"God be merciful to me a sinner."—Luke xviii. 13.

Christ always distinguished between two classes.

First, the self-righteous, busying themselves with the formalities of religion.

Presented fair outside show, but Matt. xxiii. 27.

Second, worldly persons who cared nothing for religion.

Still, not insensible to appeals of conscience.

Felt themselves drawn to Christ.

These two classes brought before us here.

"Never man spake like this man."

We can endorse this, though only privileged to read His sayings.

Who does not admire graphic picture here vividly depicted?

Contrast the Pharisee and Publican in their attitudes, in the spirit they display, and in their acceptance by God.

But bid adieu to Pharisee, and consider Publican's prayer.

**I. ITS COMPREHENSIVENESS.**

Christ's sayings must be viewed from Jewish standpoint.  
 Must not expect full communication of Divine truth, which  
 was reserved for Holy Spirit to make. John xvi. 12, 13.  
 Still His sayings are rich in latent truth. Eminently so here.  
 Prayer uttered by one whom Jews regarded as a renegade,  
 and apostate.

Yet shows far more enlightened faith than the Pharisee.  
 Prayer sets forth three great truths :

**(1.) The Holiness of God.**

Addresses God of glory dwelling between the cherubim.  
 Yet he was one whom Pharisees despised, John vii. 49.  
 Holiness of God strikingly set forth in law of Moses.  
 No system of natural religion can bring out this truth.  
 Revelation alone exhibits it as the very life of Jehovah.  
 The attribute by which he swears.  
 We as Christians must cherish this great truth.  
 Its culminating proof furnished on the Cross. See Ps. xxii.  
 1 and 3.

**(2.) The sinfulness of man.**

A necessary corollary from the former.  
 Man's sinfulness in hideous contrast with God's holiness.  
 Man, viewing himself in mirror of God's law, learns his true  
 condition.  
 Yet many assert that such a view is a libel on human  
 nature.  
 Such know nothing of plague of their own heart.  
 The publican, standing in that awful Presence, felt himself  
 to be exceeding sinful.

**(3.) The necessity of an atonement.**

There is a hopeful confidence manifested in this prayer.  
 The utterance of one who could appreciate Ps. cxxx. 3, 4.  
 Pardon impossible unless atonement made.  
 But the publican felt that forgiveness could be obtained.  
 Shrieks for mercy often uttered, when it is known that the  
 petition cannot be granted.  
 But publican knew that an atonement would be made.  
 "O God, be propitious to me." 1 John ii. 2.  
 A form of petition suited to Jewish lips.  
 On the mercy-seat God could show mercy. Heb. ix. 11, 12.

**II. ITS SUITABILITY.**

Suited to man as an awakened sinner, and as a justified believer.

Formalist may think he has no need of mercy.

But when convinced of sin, then as Ezra ix. 6.

But objection—hardly state of mind suited to advanced believer.

True, higher state of spiritual existence enjoyable.

But this not attained by many who are yet sincere believers.

These feel their need of using this petition.

But more—sense of unworthiness felt by noblest saints.

Witness Paul writing himself “the chief of sinners.”

He had obtained mercy, yet felt his need of its continued exercise.

**III. ITS EFFICACY.**

As true and real a prayer as ever fell from human lips.

The kind of prayer which God loves to hear.

Saul often prayed, yet only in Damascus was it said of him,  
“Behold he prayeth.”

So here, angels rejoicing over publican as a justified believer.

V. 14. A majesty and authority in that “I tell you.”

Bids us regard publican as inheritor of Abraham's blessing.

Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.

Publican himself feels this—“cry for mercy which was the miserère of his soul, enables him to chant the hallelujah of redemption.”\*

Grotius at Rostock died with this prayer on his lips.

Cherish a tender conscience, which regards sin as a load.

Ours to cultivate the spirit of this publican.

Repentant and believing humility brings with it life and salvation.

Safe at the foot of the cross.

A sensitive conscience employed by God to shatter self-confidence.

When this effected He will hasten to our comfort.

\* *Lange in loco.*



## THE ACCUSATION AND THE ANSWER.

"And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and thou hast followed Baalim."—1 Kings xviii. 17, 18.

God's servants under His powerful protection.

Laban compelled to refrain from injuring Jacob. Gen. xxxi. 29.

So Elijah safe spite of Ahab's hatred.

Bids Obadiah tell his master to meet him.

At that meeting Ahab can only say, v. 17.

## I. AHAB'S ACCUSATION.—v. 17.

As God's prophet, Elijah ought to have been honoured by the king.

If Balak was received with respect by Balaam, *à fortiori* Elijah.

Especially now when he was the bearer of good tidings.

Yet Ahab full of spiteful malice.

Contrast Obadiah's conduct.

But Ahab's malice explodes in the insolent salutation, *text*.

Yet there was nothing strange in this treatment. 1 Pet. iv. 12.

The world will hate those who condemn it.

The disciple of Christ must take up His cross.

If the Master called Beelzebub, the disciples must expect similar treatment.

The charge against Christ continually repeated. Luke xxiii. 2.

Believers are God's witnesses in the world.

Is. viii. 18—like Joshua "men wondered at." Ps. lxxi. 7.

Christians, in apostolic days, a sect everywhere spoken against. By Nero accused of setting Rome on fire.

Later on, Luther was a "troubler" of Christendom.

Christian missionaries accused of having caused the Indian mutiny.

Believers will not have "peace at any price." James iii. 17.

They will not sacrifice principle to peace.

The salt must not lose its savour.

In doing our Master's work, we can rejoice to be counted for "troublers" of Israel.

A charge made against faithful Ministers of the Gospel. Paul in Thessalonica. Acts xvii. 6.

The charge false, yet containing an element of truth.

Paul might have replied we admit the charge, but plead necessity.

The world under a usurper—our office. 2 Cor. v. 19.

Its love must be uprooted—its way contradicted—its false peace disturbed.

Paul's preaching overturned heathenism.

The Athenians said, Acts xvii. 18.

Ministers often like stormy petrels, precursors of a tempest.

Men go from the sanctuary discontented with themselves.

Worldly peace like stagnant water—therefore if faithful to our Master, we must be prepared to hear *text*.

## II. ELIJAH'S ANSWER.—v. 18.

There is no quailing before the tyrant.

First he gives a direct denial—I am no Achan.

Rather was he "the chariot of Israel"—the one link still binding an apostate people to their covenant God.

Happy for us, if we can honestly make this reply.

The charge we have received is Phil. ii. 15.

To the same effect, 1 Pet. iv. 15, 16.

If we cause pain to guilty consciences, we can honestly reply *text*.

Now for the well-deserved retort. *Text*.

There must be a troubler of Israel, and thou Ahab, art the man.

Elijah puts his finger on the cause of Israel's calamity.

God will endure no compact with Baal.

We are our own troublers—warming the serpent in our bosom.

We seek peace in the wrong direction.

We halt between two opinions—but, Is. xxvi. 3.

Seek for "troublers of Israel" in our own hearts.

Blame not the surgeon who tears off bandage.

Seek peace through Christ.

## THE GREETING OF A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

"And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee; because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord."—1 Kings xxi. 20.

Ahab's character described in v. 25.

A weak, sensual man, incapable of governing himself.

Men of this stamp prove Neros and Caligulas.

Here instance of length to which such a man will proceed.

Sketch occurrences leading to Naboth's murder.

Opening words of conference between Ahab and Elijah, *text*.

**I. THE GREETING OF A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.** "Hast thou found me," &c.

Elijah needed no introduction to Ahab.

The latter knew him only too well.

The sight of him now awakes conscience to sense of enormity of his crime.

Is this visitor to remind him of a higher tribunal?

The murdered Naboth could not have scared him more, *text*.

It was language addressed to one whom he *hated* and *feared*.

(1.) **He hated Elijah.**

Ahab knew of war between Jehovah and heathen idols.

The law of Moses replete with injunctions.

He knew that it was his duty to enforce Divine commands.

But he placed himself in antagonism to the God of Israel.

Thus God and His law set aside.

Hence his administration stained by tyranny and cruelty.

Even Jezebel's crime failed to awaken remorse.

But on Elijah's appearance conscience awakes—he sees the real relation in which he stands to Jehovah—addresses Jehovah's representative, *text*.

Nothing unusual in this.

Man in yielding to self love dethrones God.

Alienation of heart seen, even in conduct of Christians.

Where it exists, there is enmity to God, waiting for suitable occasion to burst forth.

You may flatter yourself that at the worst you are a neutral.

But come in contact with God's representative, His Word or His Minister.

Then neutrality seen to be a delusion. Matt. xii. 30, vi. 24.

Nay more, God says, Rom. viii. 7, James iv. 4, 5.

Conscience arouses itself to confirm this.

"Aye ; 'tis the tale which angry conscience tells  
When she with more than tragic horror swells  
Each circumstance of guilt ; when stern but true  
She brings bad actions forth into review,  
And, like the dread handwriting on the wall,  
Bids late remorse awake at reason's call ;  
Armed at all points, bids scorpion vengeance pass,  
And to the mind, holds up reflection's glass—  
The mind, which starting, heaves the heartfelt groan  
And hates the form she knows to be her own."\*

While strangers to Divine grace, conscience must make you wretched.

If in irritation, turn and say to us *text*, how can we reply but as Gal. iv. 16.

(2.) He also feared Elijah.

The sinner fights with the desperation of a foredoomed man. Reason says, human strength vain against Omnipotence.

Ahab saw that on Carmel, when 400 prophets slain at the bidding of one man.

But in interval, lost sight of dreaded delegate of heaven.

But now, stands powerless before him, only saying, *text*.

Sinner ! has it not been so with you ?

Yes, periods when terrors of the Lord felt—when word pierces—when Christ comes as judge, then *text* or Matt. viii. 29.

Where no filial fear, servile fear must exist.

Conscience may be seared, but cannot be dethroned, Rom. ii. 15.

But unconverted man's conscience will always be a guilty one, Heb. x. 27.

How many dread to hear Gospel, lest fires of smothered volcano of a guilty conscience burst forth.

If such here, shun not to meet Christ, that at last you may say, "Hast thou found me, O my Saviour?"

## II. GOD'S ANSWER TO THAT GREETING.

Elijah on God's behalf, accepts the term used by Ahab. It were idle to attempt to disguise mutual relationship.

\* C. Churchill, in Dictionary of Poetical Illustrations, 481.

Elijah no courtier, but bluntly replies, "I have," &c.  
 Ahab furnishes his own condemnation. Luke xix. 22.

"I have found thee" in Naboth's vineyard.

Sin, as an evil done in God's sight, entails retribution.

Numb. xxxii. 23.

Prov. xv. 3, and will one day say to sinner, *text*.

Better say it to you now, than on day of final doom.

God is ever speaking thus to thoughtless sinners.

It may be you have felt power of word in the sanctuary

You complain of the sermon disturbing your peace.

How can we help it? How could we know condition of  
 your heart?

Our bow drawn at a venture—God saying, *text*.

True cause of disturbance in your own alienation of heart.

Lusts folded to sleep disturbed by entrance of Word.

But resist it not—come as prodigal, Luke xv. 32.

## THE MINISTRATION OF DEATH.

"The ministration of death."—2 Cor. iii. 7.

Bible divided into Old and New Testaments.

"New" obviously in contradistinction to "Old."

But also because (1) It never waxes old; (2) Is printed in a  
 new style, v. 3; (3) It makes new creatures.

Its ministers not sacrificing priests.

But Old and New Testaments not opposed.

Author same—witness to same thing.

A spirit in the law—a letter in the Gospel.

Gospel needs spiritual-mindedness in preacher to set it forth.

Needs faith in hearers, to profit by it, Heb. iv. 2.

God's testimony under both law and Gospel, either a killing  
 letter, or a vivifying spirit.

Still as *text* applies peculiarly to law, inquire why.

## I. BECAUSE IT REVEALS SIN.

Endowed with moral sense, not as brutes.

Conscious of responsibility to Creator.

But possess sin-infected nature.

If left to self, moral distinctions obliterated.

But law prescribes duty, shows what sin is.

Presents barrier against sinful propensities.  
 Makes discovery of principle in man hostile to God.  
 Pursues it into recesses of soul.  
 Reveals sin where none suspected. Rom. vii. 7.  
 Startles out of dream of self-complacency.

## II. BECAUSE IT AGGRAVATES SIN.

Rom. v. 20. may be understood in two ways.  
 (1.) To exhibit sin in most grievous light.  
 (2.) Actually to increase it by operating on depraved nature.  
 Excited into opposition by the barrier.  
 Propensity to do wrong inherent, chafed into actual rebellion.  
 But still stronger expression, Rom. vii. 13.  
 Wrests law into instrument of death.  
 Sin and law act, and react on each other.

## III. BECAUSE IT ACCUSES OF SIN.

Satan styled "the accuser of the brethren."  
 Christ disavows this odious office, but warns John v. 45.  
 Design of law to lead to Christ.  
 It says you have nothing to expect from me.  
 If men refuse, what can it do but accuse?  
 It secures justification only for its *doers*.  
 Human perversity invests law with stern office.  
 Deut. xxxi. 26, 27.  
 Law points out duty, but does not furnish ability.

## IV. BECAUSE IT CONDEMNS FOR SIN.

Connection of sin and suffering not capricious.  
 Terrible moral fitness in the arrangement.  
 "Death wages of sin," its desert, its natural harvest.  
 Men fancy a merciful God will not punish.  
 Forget they are under stern reign of law.  
 Illust. Does the farmer imagine his untilled field will  
     produce crop?  
 Finds laws of nature uniform in operation.  
 Illust. Overthrow of second French empire.  
 In every domain where law violated, God does not interpose  
     to avert penalty.  
 Scripture warns, if under law perish.

It must condemn; Law-giver will not dishonour Himself by averting its execution.

Hear Old Testament. Prov. i. 24—26.

See vivid picture in New, Rev. vi. 15—17.

Enough here to make men pause.

Yet our fate, if not led to foot of cross.

Come then to Christ. Broken yoke of law.

Flee to Jesus as manslayer, conscious of guilt.

Though see all the turpitude of sin, His blood will cleanse.

Though conscience accuse, Rom. viii. 33.

Sentence of law reversed.

In Christ storm cloud rolled away.

### THE CHANCE ARROW.

“And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the King of Israel between the joints of the harness; wherefore he said to the driver of his chariot, turn thine hand and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.”—1 Kings xxii. 34.

Important results springing from apparent trifles.

Accidents ordained by God for effecting His purposes.

Illustrated in this incident. Sketch it.

We have here.

## I. THE SINNER DISGUISED.

Carnal mind at enmity till changed by God.

Sinner like Pharaoh says, Exod. v. 2.

Strengthens himself with Satan's weapons.

Takes the shield of unbelief—helmet of pride—girdle of prejudice.

Feet shod with sensuality.

His sword a lying tongue, wielded by a deceitful heart.

Thus enter the battle following captain, for John viii. 44.

But men unwilling to proclaim selves open enemies.

The majority disguise themselves.

Put on decent coat of external profession.

With their mouth show much love.

Are not too many of you, disguised sinners?

Yea, may we not fear for ourselves, as consider deceitful heart?

**II. THE SINNER SMITTEN.**

In vain did Ahab disguise himself.  
 So sinner vainly encourages himself in wickedness.  
 Forgets, "all things naked and open," &c.  
 How foolish to attempt disguise. Amos ix. 2, 3.  
 God brings conviction home to conscience.  
 Rebel stopped in his mad career.  
 God's Spirit employs various agencies, but especially preaching of Word.  
 Satan trembles for his ascendancy when sinner's attention rivetted, and conscience cries "thou art the man."  
 Leaves the sanctuary a sadder and a wiser man.  
 But too frequently a different effect produced.  
 Sinner feels annoyed, blames the preacher.  
 Feels his portrait drawn in no flattering terms.  
 Considers he is made the subject of an unwarrantable personal attack.  
 But remember, our bow "drawn at a venture."  
 The pain you feel, the work of the Spirit.  
 Let it impel you to flee to the good Physician.  
 If you will not yield to the arrow of conviction, you must fall beneath the arrow of vengeance.

**III. THE SINNER COMPLAINING.**—"Turn thine hand," &c.

Instinct of wounded animal to get rid of dart.  
 So sinner seeks comfort from "broken cisterns."  
 Tries business or pleasure, as if "no balm in Gilead."  
 No true remedy except in Christ.  
 In vain try the law; it is like Elisha's staff on face of dead child.  
 There seems to be a repugnance to come directly to Christ.  
 It is always so. See Hosea v. 13.  
 But Christ can—extracts arrow—pours in oil.  
 No fancied sketch, listen to Cowper's confession.

"I was a stricken deer that left the herd  
 Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd  
 My panting side was charged, when I withdrew  
 To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
 There was I found by One who had Himself  
 Been hurt by th' archers. In His side He bore  
 And in His hands and feet the cruel scars.  
 With gentle force soliciting the darts,  
 He drew them forth and heal'd and bade me live."



Let no unworthy motives keep you back.

Then you can take up song. Ps. ciii. 2—5.

Once more, consider complaint "I am wounded."

Truly a grievous wound, like Cain's.

An awakened conscience no light load.

Issue at last either in conversion, or utter hardness of heart.

Appeal to hearers of Word.

Beware of arrow of death.

"Lo, on a narrow neck of land,  
'Twixt two unbounded seas you stand,  
Secure insensible ;  
A point of time, a moment's space  
Removes you to that heavenly place,  
Or shuts you up in hell."

### ELIJAH'S TRANSLATION.

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."—2 Kings ii. 11.

On Sunday last, reviewed last conference of Elijah and Ahab.

Now consider closing scene in the prophet's life.

A striking unity in whole career of Elijah.

His intensity of purpose has elevated him to the highest place among the heroes of the old covenant.

A fascination about his history, as seen in the language current amongst the Jews.

Mark viii. 28, ix. 12, xv. 36.

Expectation of His return gathered strength from the mode of his departure.

Consider Elijah's translation as :

### I. A REAL HISTORICAL FACT.

A calmness pervading language of sacred writers.

History of Jews interwoven with miraculous incidents.

Persons narrating these, if sceptical, would adopt sensational mode of writing.

But in Bible, miracles described naturally, as ordinary history.

They were public events, which candid examination proves to be no myths or fables.

Look at the narrative in this light.

*A priori* conviction, that close of his career would correspond with its previous tenor.

*Text* in keeping with his proclamation of the famine, &c., &c.

This impression produced on his contemporaries.

V. 1 shows Elijah and Elisha knew it.

They felt severance from each other to be no ordinary trial.

Yearning for solitude, Elijah visits schools of prophets.

These men prepared for the extraordinary event.

They watch the two prophets.

Yet they are still sceptical, v. 16—not unreasonable.

They report the result, when Elisha replies, v. 18.

Now consider candour of historian—the number of witnesses—their incredulity—and say is it not historical?

Its bearing upon religious controversies of the day.

Efforts made to explain away miracles.

Science rejects them as contrary to experience—as violation of the laws of nature—as miracles only to the ignorant.

Yet it professes respect for Christianity.

But Christianity bound up with these supernatural events.

If the miracles of Jewish history are false, so also are our Lord's miracles, especially His resurrection.

On that Christianity is built, 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17—19.

Yet read evidences, the sealing of the stone—His successive appearances—incredulity of witnesses—and then say, 1 Cor. xv. 20.

God's revelation may conflict with ordinary experience, but "Revelation itself is a miracle and miracles are the proof of it."

Exhort to cling to God's testimony. Col. ii. 8.

## II. AS A LESSON FULL OF COMFORTING SIGNIFICANCE.

Even worldly men know that this world is not man's final home.

Man's thoughts instinctively range higher.

Human heart yearns for heaven.

Heathen mythology full of fanciful stories of it.

The place where man flatters himself he will hold companionship with the Deity.

Pride at the root of it, like Lucifer. Is. xiv. 13, 14.

How many climbing spirits are there still.

Yes heaven is opened, but John iii. 5.

Christ has taught us how to ascend, by obedience.

This obedience Elijah exhibited, like Enoch. Heb. xi. 5.

Rom. xv. 4. The hope of immortality confirmed here.

Enoch's translation not described. Gen. v. 24.

But otherwise with Elijah's.

Does it not contradict 1 Cor. xv. 50 ?

No, for same power could instantaneously make him "meet for the inheritance."

Look at it as type of Christ's ascension.

Jesus ascended as Head of His Church.

He ascended with His resurrection body, no longer truly "flesh and blood."

In Heaven He supplies us with title to inheritance, and with evidence of its reality.

There He waits to welcome His people. Ps. lxxiii. 24.

Though this honour unique in its singularity, yet shared in by all God's saints.

*Vide* John viii. 51. As truly as Elijah.

"In Christ I live, in Christ I draw the breath  
Of the true life ! Let then earth, sea and sky  
Make war against me ! On my front I show  
Their mighty Master's seal. In vain they try  
To end my life, that can but end its woe.  
Is that a death-bed where a Christian lies ?  
Yes ! but not his—'tis Death itself there dies."

Many a dying believer carried to heaven as in a fiery chariot.

Christianity can boast of its triumphs over death.

But more, this incident an earnest of 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

A glorious hour of final rapture of saints.

Shall we share in its triumphs ?

Events point to its near approach.

Be like Elijah, zealous for the Lord God of hosts.

## NAAMAN'S WILFULNESS.

"But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike His hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage."—2 Kings v. 11, 12.

A narrative replete with instruction.

Related simply, but graphically.

Sketch narrative down to *text*.

Method of salvation of same character, and same dislike expressed.

God's plan will always be despised for two reasons.

## I. BECAUSE IT IS OPPOSED TO CARNAL CONCEPTIONS.

Several days occupied by Naaman in journey, during which musing over hopes excited.

Certain of cure, only question how would it be wrought.

Gave reins to fancy, pictured prophet as priest of Rimmon.

But Elisha spoiled it all.

Mortifying to find castle in air collapse.

Naaman the spoiled child of fortune ill fitted to endure disappointment. "Went away in a rage."

Is it not so with gospel plan of salvation?

The terms of salvation are what God alone can declare.

Not for criminal to tutor his judge, or rebel his sovereign.

Yet practically men do this, framing theories of own.

One believes God so just that there can be no hell.

Another, He is so merciful He must pardon.

Another needs no book-revelation, for intuitions of reason sufficient.\*

Another believes in infallible Church.

But Scripture opposed to such views, therefore enraged.

So when Christ on earth, men provoked at One whose doctrine outraged national convictions.

Thus Nicodemus, "How can a man be born again?"

Thus Jews, "How give flesh to eat?"

Thus John x. 30, 31; but Is. lv. 8, 9.

\* *Vide* Rogers' Eclipse of Faith, p. 75.

If therefore Christ had fulfilled carnal expectations, well doubt Divine mission ; and if Bible confirm wild fancies, well distrust its claims to Divine inspiration.  
But because God's way not man's, because plan different, because Word hard to be understood, "turn away in rage."

## II. BECAUSE IT IS HUMBLING TO CARNAL PRIDE.

Gather one secret cause of dislike from v. 13.  
This would have evoked his co-operation, but too bad to be treated as child.  
Insult aggravated by selection of Jordan.  
Syrian naturally proud of Chrysoroas.\*  
Felt hurt, that another river should be preferred.  
Is not Gospel disliked from same cause ?  
The sinner clings to idea of his own merit.  
Thus Jews, John vi. 28, and the answer, v. 29.  
The same as Acts xvi. 30, 31.  
In other words, "go wash and be clean."  
Christ opened fountain for sin.  
But distasteful to natural heart ; v. 12.  
Am I not to be credited for good intentions, &c. ?  
Must my virtues be dragged as suppliants to a tribunal for crime ?  
Thus proud heart rebels, establish own righteousness, ignorant of Jer. xvii. 5.  
How different Paul, Phil. iii. 19.  
Such must be our spirit.  
God made a covenant with Christ, but for us to cavil at its terms, would be to confirm our first rebellion by a second.  
Our wisdom to take our virtues as offerings to Christ, and say, "not unto us, O Lord."  
Happily for Naaman, better counsels prevailed.  
Alas, in this respect, few imitators.  
How many persevere in sin, when convinced of danger ?  
How many cling to religion of pomp ?  
How many think they are "heirs of God," though unable to produce title-deeds ?

\* *Vide* Kiel's Commentary *in loco* ; and Dean Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, p. 409.

How many a mere name to live by, saying, "Peace, when no peace"?

You are a spiritual leper, for which only one way of cure. Do not resist grace.

Come to Christ, and you will be clean, "a new creature."

## THE OFFICE OF THE LAW.

"Wherefore then serveth the law?"—Gal. iii. 19.

Paul describes himself as "a wise master-builder."

He had been raised up to set forth benefits of Christ's atonement.

In doing so, he had to encounter prejudices and antipathies. Jews clung to the law while ignorant of its spirit.

Sought to lead astray Gentile converts. Acts xv. 1.

Therefore true relation of law to gospel needed to be shown.

This Paul does in Epistle to Romans and Galatians.

In Galatians he deals with ceremonial law.

In Romans with the moral law.

Epistle to Hebrews completes circle of Christian apologetics.

For these three Epistles no more fitting motto than *text*.

Inquire (1) negatively then (2) positively.

## I. NEGATIVELY.

(1). It is not a means of the sinner's justification.

How shall a man be just with God, an important inquiry.

The sinner's acceptance must be in harmony with God's righteousness.

The law professes to give answer, "do, and thou shalt live."

But the sinner finds this impossible.

"Thy commandment is exceeding broad," his faltering confession.

Sees an imperfection about his best efforts.

The righteousness of justification must be absolute.

Achilles invulnerable, but his heel the weak spot.

So the righteousness of the law has its weak spot. James ii. 10.

Besides it can make no atonement for past sins.

Therefore inquiry remains unanswered. Rom. vii. 24.

## (2). It is not a rule of life for the believer.

This evident as regards the ceremonial law.

Only Romanists and Ritualists seek to re-impose it upon Christians.

But it is also the case as regards the moral law.

True, it is a perfect rule of duty, and a permanent one.

Written on tables of stone, and confirmed by Christ. Matt. v. 17.

Yet New Testament teaches us, that believers are not under its authority. Rom. vi. 14.

The law a yoke to unconverted because an external rule, but not to believer, because he has imbibed spirit of Lawgiver.

Hence 1 Tim. i. 9. He complies with the law, not as law, but because grace poured into heart.

In fact a fulfilment of Jer. xxxi. 31—33.

The covenant renewed upon a nobler basis, that of Ps. xl. 8.

Not Antinomianism, but character of law changed. Rom. viii. 2.

## II. POSITIVELY.

## (1). It is intended to be a revelation of God's righteousness.

This needed, since men call "good evil."

God's truth and holiness seen in Mosaic law.

Borne witness to by ceremonial law, washings, &c.

Still more so by moral law, which demands whole heart.

Second table added to make it impossible to counterfeit righteousness.

"I love God" tested by second table. 1 John iv. 20.

Hence believers need to keep the moral law before them.

In looking into this mirror saved from self delusion.

Defective views of duty corrected by authoritative standard.\*

Taught that the freedom of the Spirit is a freedom within bounds and limits of the law. Rom. vii. 6.

## (2). It was designed to be a discoverer of sin.

This, Apostle has in view here. "It was added because of transgression."

It was added to promise of Christ, as appendage to complete the covenant.

\* Fairbairn's Typology, Vol. II. Book III. Sec. 6.

But added to reveal sin, by reason of failure to fulfil covenant.  
Sinner sees himself guilty and condemned.

This dwelt on in Rom. vii. 7.\*

Before this, "sin was dead" v. 8—it lay lightly on his conscience.

Sin then "as a strong man armed, with his goods in peace."

Thus "sin became exceeding sinful" v. 13.

Such the awful design of the law, which we must therefore preach.

Many unconverted in all our congregations.

Upon you, the law remains in full force.

You must be taught what sin is, "the transgression of the law."

(3). Its great design is to lead to Christ.

This again brought out by the Apostle here. Read verse.

Between the promise and the sinner the law stands to show how the covenant can be made a blessed reality.

Points to Christ, the true seed of Abraham.

The sinner sees in Him all that the law requires.

In Him alone is the perfect righteousness it demands, discoverable.

In Him he sees that spotless victim whose sacrifice is of infinite efficacy.

In Him he discerns the true High Priest, who alone can confer true absolution.

Learn thus to regard the law.

See v. 24.

Till you have embraced Christ you are under the pedagogy of the law, in a state of pupilage.

Hence the unconverted sinner is in bondage.

Come to Christ.

"Not the labours of my hands  
Can fulfil Thy law's demands,  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears for ever flow,  
All for sin could not atone,  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

\* Fraser on Sanctification.



## A DAY OF GOOD TIDINGS.

"Then they said one to another, We do not well ; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace : if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us."—2 Kings vii. 9.

Picture the horrors of a siege.

Brings out worst passions of human nature.

Endured now by Samaria. Comp. ch. vi. 25.

The anguish of the wretched king revealed by ch. vi. 30.

How great then must have been the misery of these lepers.

Impelled to throw themselves on the mercy of Syrian foe.

The result—leading to language of self-reproach. *Text.*

Applies to us. Sets forth :

## I. THE CHARACTER OF THE PERIOD IN WHICH WE LIVE.

"A day of good tidings."

Contrast presented to lepers, not greater than we witness between heathendom and Christianity.

We know something of the civilization of ancient Greece and Rome.

Yet it left masses in ignorance of God, &c.

Religion then mere superstition, which educated classes despised.

Public morals depraved, impure. People cruel, gladiatorial shows.

Civilization apart from Christianity fails to furnish "bonds of society."

If so, how appalling condition of uncivilized heathen.

Burton, Livingstone, &c., hint only at horrors it would be indecent to describe.

From this, turn to our own favoured country.

Christianity overcame prejudices of corrupt nature.

Has given men clear views of God as a Father.

Has made men feel they are members one of another.

Impels them to imitate Christ in going after the lost.

Build hospitals, schools, reformatories, almshouses, &c.

Though still much to deplore, yet say with lepers, *text.*

**II. THE CONDUCT REQUIRED FROM US IN CONSEQUENCE.**

Rom. xiv. 7 has doubtless a secondary application to our fellow men.

Each a unit of one great whole.

God's blessing diffusive, not to be monopolized.

They are also reflexive in influence.

Short-sighted policy to concentrate thoughts on ourselves.

Alas ! that selfishness should make us forget others.

So these lepers who said, *text*.

Applies to us as stewards for God.

Bond of common redemption overlaps ties of kindred, &c.

Rom. xii. 5.

The Fatherhood of God involves the brotherhood of man.

Happily recognized in London, so much so as to call for a "Charity Organization Society."

But not to be confined to home ; the world our field.

Is. xxxv. 6.

"We do not well to hold peace, &c."

'Tis ours to save our brethren, with peace and love to win  
Their darkened hearts from error, ere they harden it to sin ;  
But if man before his duty with a listless spirit stands,  
Ere long the great Avenger takes the work from out his hands."\*

Hold our peace we cannot ; let us

(1.) **Address ourselves to God.**

Christ left work of evangelization to human agents.

But retains power to give effect to their efforts.

1 Cor. iii. 6, a fundamental axiom.

The Holy Spirit the great agent of conversion.

Plead with Him in prayer. Comp. Is. li. 9.

(2.) **Address ourselves to man.**

Rom. vi. 13 followed by v. 14, 15.

Here our bounden duty set forth.

The support of Christian missions has a reflexive benefit.

Increases our own spiritual life.

\* J. R. Lowell.

## THE TEN LEPERS.

“And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?”—Luke xvii. 17.

As dependent creatures we are conscious of obligations incurred.

Ingratitude odious.

Benefactors who “do good by stealth” dislike to be thanked, because—

(1.) Appear to intercept praise to God.

(2.) Suspicious of voluble professions of gratitude.

Yet pained at witnessing ingratitude.

Increased in proportion to greatness of benefit, and rank of benefactor.

Yet how frequently may question of *text* be asked.

Condition of these men miserable.

Outcasts, yet bound to each other by common misery.

Now observe ;

## I. THE STRENGTH OF THEIR FAITH.

Knew well their disease incurable, 2 Kings v. 7.

Yet they appeal saying v. 13.

Faith further evidenced, by prompt obedience v. 14.

Knew for what purpose that command given.

With disease still clinging, go in faith.

Of a nobler spirit than Naaman.

God by trifling commands tests sincerity of obedience.

As in Paradise one tree fenced round, so here.

Consistency of Christ in honouring ordinances of Judaism.

He who, as Son, above law, honours it as Servant.

Let us seek to imbibe His spirit.

## II. THE REWARD OF THEIR OBEDIENCE.

V. 14. How far they had gone, not told.

In path of duty found what sought, and so we.

Ordinances the channels of Divine grace.

“Search the Scriptures.” “Forsake not assembling.”

Though demand more effective agency, no other will be provided. Luke xvi. 31.

Our wisdom to wait in way of God’s appointment.

**III. THE COLDNESS OF THEIR HEARTS.**

Nine forget Benefactor—Jews.

One returns to give thanks—a Samaritan.

One of “dogs.” Sense of gratitude makes him singular.

See source of Christian thankfulness—root, humility.

Privileges may be stumbling-blocks.

May infect with spiritual pride, true view, as overflowings of Divine love.

Yet conduct of nine shocks us. *Text.*

How accurately has Christ reckoned up the nine.

His love asks now, as one day He will ask as Judge.

Appeal to bystanders;

So Isaiah i. 2, and Ezek. viii. 12.

So here requires “Glory to God.”

Christ’s words true for all time.

Hobbes defines gratitude, as “lively sense of future favours.”

Betrays cynicism ; we reject it.

True definition.

God our benefactor ; “not only with lips but in lives.”

Comp. Heb. xii. 28 (Alford *in loco*) with Ps. l. 23.

Ingratitude root of heathen apostacy, Rom. i. 21.

Root of Israel’s backslidings.

Illustrations. Sick man on restoration to health.

Unfortunate, restored to prosperity.

Prosperous man cursed with ill-temper.

All pray “have mercy” and read that mercy everywhere.

Yet how poor our return !

Neglect of Lord’s Table.

Coldness of response to charitable appeals.

Water poured into vessel overflows, if sound.\*

So we as vessels of God’s mercy.

Else “broken cisterns,” not “vessels of mercy.”

But not so if as lepers cried to Jesus.

Then like Samaritan give thanks.

Then daily mercies sanctified v. 19.

Then “songs in house of pilgrimage ;” meet for heaven where only praise.

\* Archbishop Trench on Miracles.

## THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE FLESH.

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."—Gal. v. 24.\*

Sects or parties usually designated by a particular name.

Christ, however, called His disciples only "friends."

Afterwards called "Christians" by the heathen.

But this name worthless without the reality.

Here furnished with true characteristic of a Christian. *Text.*

Examine first, terms of which statement composed.

"They that are Christ's"—they who accept Him as prophet, priest, and king, &c.

"The flesh"—frequently used for the body, but not here.

It means human nature as corrupted by sin,

It refers to every outbreak of evil principle within.

Now inquire—

# I. WHY DOES THE APOSTLE TERM THIS CORRUPTION OF NATURE "THE FLESH"?

(1.) Because it is that part of our nature in which it is chiefly seated.

Concupiscence the secret root of sin.

Each individual has peculiar propensities.

True, sin rages in the soul, but its first promptings in the body.

Connection of body and soul mysterious.

Doctrine of "original sin" taught by Scripture, confirmed by experience.

Theory of divines' that the soul becomes polluted on its conjunction with the body.

If this be true, then it is clear the body is a source of pollution.

Scripture sanctions this view.

Rom. vii. 24—also verse 18.

He carries about the prison in which his soul lies a captive.

This must continue while he is in the body.

Well might he groan in his body. 2 Cor. v. 8.

(2.) Because of its nearness to the soul.

The soul and sin as closely connected as the soul and the body.

\* This outline is based on South's sermon on *text*.

It is in fact an identity, so that to deny sin is to "deny ourselves."

But their nearness seen by viewing the means by which God seeks to separate them.

The blood of the Son of God—the influence of the Spirit of God.

Hence Heb. iv. 12.

Union of soul and sin only dissolved by the sword of the Spirit.

Sin like the poisoned tunic of Hercules.

It is the life-destroying parasite, like the ivy on the oak.

It is a strange stock engrafted on the soul.

Clings to the sinner, even after death.

(3.) *Because of its dearness to us.*

The nearer a thing is, the dearer it is. Eph. v. 29.

How careful we are of our body!

Men think not of the soul till all hope for the body is gone.

Sea and land ransacked to pamper the body.

Yet dear as is the flesh, sin is equally dear.

It is the darling of the soul—its Delilah.

It is cherished as a dear child.

Men choose to die rather than part with sin.

How miserable the sinners condition!

He is a drudge—a slave.

We must put a knife to the throat of this Isaac, and *text*.

## II. WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY "CRUCIFYING" IT?

Evident allusion to mode of Christ's death.

Close sympathy between the Head and the members.

So Paul, Gal. ii. 20. As Elisha stretched himself on dead child, so Paul on cross of Christ.

Compare also Phil. iii. 10, Gal. vi. 14.

He prefers the word "crucified" to any other.

As a Christian he had obeyed, Matt. xvi. 24.

It implies—

(1.) *The death of the flesh.*

Sin must be hunted down to death.

Many deal with sin as Ahab did. 1 Kings xxi. 27.

We must deal with it as the Roman soldiers dealt with Christ.

If we let it escape, our life must be its ransom, as 1 Kings  
xx. 42.

Imperfect mortification of sin ruins the sinner.

A Saul will spare Agag, but a Samuel will hew him in pieces  
before the Lord.

(2.) **A violent death.**

Sin never dies a natural death.

The strong man armed will not surrender at the first  
summons.

Sin requires force to dislodge it.

(3.) **A painful and vexatious death.**

The cross eminently painful.

We must therefore sit down and count the cost.

We are to live as it were on the rack.

(4.) **A shameful and cursed death.**

Crucifixion reserved for slaves. See Gal. iii. 13.

Sin doomed to die, yet not to die honourably.

Apply the subject.

**FALSE ZEAL.**

“And he said, come with me and see my zeal for the Lord.”—2 Kings  
x. 16.

The zeal of Jehu in carrying out this commission.

Yet that zeal defective, rendering him an object of aversion  
to posterity.

True zeal is merely intense love of God.

Gal. iv. 18. Zeal important, but it must be rightly directed.

False zeal has done immense mischief.

“Come and see my zeal,” the cry of hot-headed sectaries.

Look at this false zeal as illustrated in career of Jehu.

**I. WHAT IS ITS SPRING OR SOURCE.**

We answer, self-love.

True zeal, kindled by sincere love to God.

But in false zeal there is always mingled a secret self-  
pleasing.

Jehu an ambitious man—a soldier of fortune.

His impetuous energy evinced by his “driving furiously.”

One incident made a deep impression on him.\* 1 Kings  
xxi. 19.

Did he dream he was to be the instrument of doom?  
His heart leaped to embrace divinely imposed royalty.  
His commission chimed in with what he knew was his own  
wisest policy as a usurper.

No previous revolution had been so blood-stained.

Yet Jehu secretly conscious of other motives.

Subsequent events proved how insincere he was. v. 31.

He stamped his character on his dynasty, hence Hos. i. 4.

But now, eager to secure approval of God-fearing men.

Makes Jehonadab his friend, *text*.

Zeal like this constantly exhibited by professing Christians.

Men like to appear to be in alliance with God.

Strange that this should be so, even when idolizing self.

*Text*, their cry, but zeal in noisy, arrogant vapourings.

While true love is like the lily of the valley, false zeal erects  
pedestal for itself.

Such the zeal of the Pharisees.

They have many imitators, needing that we should be on  
our guard.

Examples of false zeal

In defending Protestant religion while living in neglect of  
its great truths.

In defence of the Established Church in the spirit of  
Demetrius. Acts xix. 36.

In becoming devotees of Ritualism, while still clinging to  
world.

In giving largely to public charities, while mean and grasping  
in conduct of business.

These enough to show how liable we all are.

Rom. x. 2. We want knowledge of God and of what He  
requires.

Bring selves to test of God's word—be not half-hearted—  
when heart wholly surrendered say *text*, nay, then want  
no self-laudation for "our witness in heaven."

## II. WHAT IS ITS PROMINENT CHARACTERISTIC.

We answer, inveterate cruelty.

List of Jehu's victims—the last massacre.

A bloody page in Israel's history.

\* Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. Art. Jehu.



True they were "times of ignorance."  
 To condemn Jehu's conduct absolutely, would be to condemn Phineas, Numb. xxv. 8, and Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 40.  
 But these were true men, while Jehu was the slave of sin.

*Thou to wax fierce  
 In the cause of the Lord,  
 To threat and to pierce  
 With the heavenly sword,  
 Anger and Zeal,  
 And the joy of the Brave,  
 Who bade thee to feel  
 Sin's slave ?\**

This characteristic displayed in every age.  
 Imbibing false views of truth, men imagine they are qualified to be Heaven's executioners.

The further from the truth, the more bloodthirsty they become.

You see this in Judaism.

Phil. iii. 6, viewed in the light of history, from Calvary down to the Zealots—Who, Josephus says,

"Called themselves by this name, as if they were zealous in good undertakings and were not rather zealous in the worst actions, and extravagant in them beyond the example of others."

You see this in the Church of Rome, Rev. xvii. 6.

Every nation its tales to tell of her deeds of horror.

The present condition of Spain an effect of the Inquisition.

This, what false zeal of Ritualists seeks to re-establish.

The great fomentor of national discord.

But let us not forget how apt we all are to cherish this cruel disposition.

Heartlessly consign stubborn opponents to perdition.

Reason to distrust zeal which promotes uncharitableness.

Hear the Master, Luke ix. 54—56.

This exposes false zeal, and teaches us how to act.

"Not to destroy, but to save," must be our motto.

Christ inflamed with zeal, but shown in "bearing our infirmities."

This animated Paul. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

This impels Christians to rescue fallen and degraded.

Cultivate this zeal.

Ask God to kindle His love in heart, and then all will see what you are, so that need not say *text*.

\* *Lyra Apostolica*.

**THE NATURE OF FALSE AND TRUE RELIGION.**

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.—Gal. vi. 15.

St Paul's Epistles meet failings of human mind.

The great Doctor of the Church.

In correcting errors in the Churches of Rome, Corinth, and Galatia, rendered lasting service.

The very order in which these Epistles stand in the Canon instructive.\*

The Epistle to the Romans lays the foundation of “justification by faith only.”

Without this no repose for individual soul, and no solidity for system of doctrine.

Also vindicates the doctrine from the charge of novelty.

The Epistles to the Corinthians deal with the speculative Greek mind.

The Epistle to the Galatians meets Jewish bigotry and intolerance.

Here stands midway between two opposing tides of thought.

In Ep. to Corinthians opposed false views of Christian liberty.

Here maintains liberty, v. 1.

Yet manifests desire to moderate violence of opposing factions.

But on great question in dispute, speaks clearly.

The question at issue whether Christians should be a mere Jewish sect, or the Catholic Church of Christ.†

Hence earnestness saying in v. 6, and in *text*.

**I. THE NATURE OF FALSE RELIGION.**

Man impelled to offer worship to the Deity.

But while unconverted, cannot rise above natural principles.

Regards forms and ceremonies, &c., as all essential.

In this, essence of false religion.

A system of superstitious scruples, Col. ii. 21.

\* Bernard's Progress of Doctrine in the New Test.

† Conybeare and Howson's Life of St. Paul.

*Text* condemns two classes of erroneous opinions.

The battle between faith and works always being fought.

Now Apostle says salvation not of works as Jew maintained,  
nor of faith *solus*, as Gentiles asserted, ch. v. 13.

False religion always arrays itself under one or other.

The first which builds on works most prevalent.

Flatters carnal pride, with the idea of being our own Saviour.

So heathen.—This cardinal error of Romish system.

Gaining ground in the Reformed Church of England.

The second equally mischievous, viz., building on faith to  
the exclusion of works.

Boast of correct Scriptural views while heart unrenewed.

Don't lean on Christ as Saviour from the *power* of sin.

Their religion consists in inveighing against the errors and  
vices of times in which live.

Illustrated in ultra Protestant zeal.

Party zeal makes much of trivialities, loses sight of charity.

False religion dislodges believer from his true standing in  
Christ.

But neither use nor neglect of ordinances, neither fasting  
nor feasting, &c., contribute to commend us in God's sight.

Must go beyond adherence to creeds and parties, &c., for *text*.

## II. THE NATURE OF TRUE RELIGION.

Demands an entire change of nature, literally "a new  
creation."

Contrast Gen. i. 27 with Gen. vi. 5.

Creative power needed to take sinner out of himself and  
plant him in Christ.

Till then all his virtues, &c., only "splendid sins."

Why? Because heart unchanged. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

This always insisted on. John iii. 3, 1 John v. 18.

Important distinction between making and begetting.

Adam begat son in his own likeness.

A new Adam therefore needed to beget new race.

These, "born of God." This the great essential.

So Peter says, "if ye call on the Father" how act. 1 Pet.  
i. 14—16.

Men call God their Father, but no, Christ says, John viii. 44.

A true son of God must be new born.

How complete the transformation. 2 Cor. v. 17.

Thus understand earnestness in insisting on this. *Text*.

Without it no title to the inheritance, 1 Pet. i. 3 ; no hope of the inheritance ; no enjoyment of the inheritance. Heaven would be a hell to the unconverted. Rev. xxii. 11. "Meetness" required. Col. i. 12.

The age of miracles past.

Only Church of Rome boasts of "lying wonders."

But true Church has one standing miracle, the conversion of souls to God.

### THE NEW CREATURE.

"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."—Gal. vi. 16.

Distractions of Christendom humiliating to God's people.

Reverse of Christ's prayer. John xvii. 21.

Camp of Saints split up into hostile parties.

No wonder led to inquire how union effected.

Never so much as now, but in wrong direction.

Communion sought with corrupt Greek and Roman Churches, while our Nonconformist brethren ignored.

Such union hollow and unreal.

Union in Christ alone, though minor differences prevail, for Divine grace not a Procrustes-bed.

Variety a characteristic of all God's works, but still certain prominent features.

Hold fast to Head ; no confidence in flesh, cling to cross.

*Text.*

### I. THE RULE OF THE NEW CREATURE.

Object of this Epistle to set forth way of salvation.

Salvation not by works, but already wrought out for us.

This the Gospel, from which Galatians dislodged.

Man instinctively craves for a rule of duty.

"Good Master, what good thing must I do, &c."

Mistake in supposing the law such a rule.

In vain did the law itself protest against the delusion.

Galatians would not be persuaded, were "bewitched," so that apostle "marvelled."

Points to strife prevailing among them in consequence of losing sight of rule of Christian fellowship.

Unholy rivalry between Jew and Gentile, whereas these distinctions were the rags and tatters of the old man, v. 15.

This, then, the true rule of the child of God.

Constantly insisted on in Scripture. John. iii. 3; Rom. viii. 9.

Yet regarded as fanciful eastern sayings.

Hence rule of Christian walking lost sight of, for mere ceremonialism.

How else account for prevalence of a boastful spirit?

This opposed to rule as enunciated in v. 14.

The cross the only ground for boasting.

But objected that nothing singular in this, for all Christendom glories in cross.

But not thus with Paul, as dying crucified malefactor who felt that he was done with the world for ever.

## II. THE TITLE OF THE NEW CREATURE.

Israel was Jew's name of honour.

Name conferred by God Himself on Jacob.

This in Rom. ix. 3—6, puts "Israelites" in forefront.

The Jews confined it to themselves, refused it to aliens.

But "not all Israel who are of Israel," it belongs to those who observe rule of *text*. "*Even upon*" literally.

So Phil. iii. 2, 3. Also Rom. ii. 28, 29.

Imbued spirit of true Israel, who links properties of seed of Abraham to perfections of Jehovah.\*

In Him combined Israel's privilege and God's power.

Because this combination wanting in Jews, prophets turn from Israel in one sense to Israel in another.

That nobler Israel embodied in Christ, and in those who "bear marks."

May we be enrolled in this "general assembly," &c.

Too many belong to the "mixed multitude." Exod. xii. 38.

Contemptible rabble,—no soldiers of the cross,—no Israel of God.

## III. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE NEW CREATURE.

With no ordinary feelings pronounces benediction.

Yes, even they stand in need of peace and mercy.

Conscious of sins which cry for mercy.

Beset by troubles so that appeal for peace.

\* Fairbairn's Typology. Appendix III. p. 395, third edition.

On the one hand a body of sin, on the other hand a thorn in the flesh.

Peace theirs, as a result of God's creative energy.

Peace, not result of reasoning, &c., for 1 Thess. v. 3.

The Creator alone can bestow it, Is. lvii. 19.

A reality about this peace, John xiv. 27.

Produces peace with one another, while mercy begets large minded tolerance.

Seek thus to walk and you will have no relish for topics of dissension.

The Church bewails her divisions ; but each believer can do something to maintain "unity of spirit."

The apostle's direction is Phil. iii. 16.

Our union never broken if look out of ourselves to Christ.

Then "peace flow as river."

#### PRAYER.

"And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it : and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord."—2 Kings xix. 14.

Men confident in expression of opinion as to religious questions.

Won't trouble to inquire how far justified by God's word.

Hence wide-spread prevalence of error.

Scripture declares this must be the case.

Its truths need a new faculty in man to be rightly apprehended.

Till this obtained, man has only a partial grasp of truth.

Hence cherish false views of truth, and contempt of God's people.

This illustrated in Rabshakeh's conduct.

As Alaric styled himself "the scourge of God," so Ch. xviii. 25.

True, God does employ such instruments, how ? Is. x. 15.

Rabshakeh points to policy of Hezekiah. Ch. xviii. 22.

Thus shows incapacity to judge rightly.

Hezekiah's position alarming.

Assyria a colossal power—swallowing up minor kingdoms as

Rabshakeh says, v. 13.

But Hezekiah has one resource left ; *Text*.

That resource is prayer ; consider :

## I. ITS COMFORT.

Job v. 7, is of universal application.

Periods when trouble *will* come, showing folly of Ps. x. 6.

Unforeseen combinations render caution of no avail.

So with Hezekiah—a faithful servant of God. Ch. xviii. 5.

But most loyal saints have often to endure great fight of afflictions.

Rabshakeh's letter betrayed rancour and malignity of his designs.

What could Hezekiah do? *Text.*

Something sublime in that action.

As Mark Antony exhibited mantle of Cæsar, saying—

“Look ! in this place ran Cassius' dagger through,  
See what a rent the envious Casca made ;  
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed.”

so Hezekiah spreads letter and appeals, v. 16.

Will you say no good could be gained by doing so?—nay,  
rather comfort gained.

Yes, trouble is the true school of prayer.

“Trials make the promise sweet,  
Trials give new life to prayer,  
Trials bring me to His feet,  
Lay me low and keep me there.”

So David felt. Ps. cxlii. 2.

Thus makes God a partner with himself.

Obeys Apostolic charge “pray without ceasing.”

It enables you to realize comfort of Divine presence.

It assists you to recognize existence of God's fatherly relationship.

A sweetness and blessedness in this.

Sure of His sympathy, confident of His nearness, not  
ashamed to tell Him minutest troubles.

Prayer a necessity—men only curse because made to pray.\*

It reinstates you as a son in your Father's house.

Happy they who are in habit of prayer.

“Words cannot tell what blest relief  
Here, from my every grief I find,  
What strength for warfare—balm for grief,  
What peace of mind.

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption, Sect. 119.

Hushed is each doubt ; gone every fear ;  
 My spirit seems in heaven to stay ;  
 And e'en the penitential tear  
 Is wiped away.

## II. ITS EFFICACY.

Christians live in a house where will of Father not exclusive.\*  
 God not a despot whose fiat is rigid and unalterable.  
 Prayer efficacious, so that will of children concurs with that  
 of Father.

"Prayer is a creature's strength, his very breath and being,  
 Prayer is the golden key that can open the wicket of mercy,  
 Prayer is the magic sound that saith to faith 'so be it,'  
 Prayer is the slender nerve that moveth the muscles of omnipotence."†

Events not governed by a stern imperious destiny.  
 Believer can approach God confidently. Heb. xi. 2.  
 So Hezekiah acted—Isaiah sent with answer.  
 Then angel goes forth, causing his people to rejoice that

"The might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword  
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

Foes as formidable assailing citadel of our life.  
 Cease from prayer and you are a slave, but meant to be a  
 "prince" like Jacob.  
 As look into hearts need to spread their sinfulness before God.  
 Need to cry importunately. Ps. li. 10.  
 Our own fault if in a low, impoverished spiritual condition.  
 In prayer there is a power which even God cannot resist.  
 See Exod. xxxii. 9, 10. "Let me alone" how startling.  
 As said of Christ, Mark vi. 5, 6. so God could inflict no  
 judgments because of Moses' faith.  
 Folly of talking of immutability of laws of nature, and  
 uselessness of prayer.  
 We can appeal to "our Father in heaven."  
 Address believers.  
 Make further trial of God's faithfulness.  
 God waits to be gracious. Ezek. xxxvi. 37.  
 All things conspire to urge us to come as suppliants. Heb.  
 iv. 16.

\* Monsell.

† Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy.



## THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

“That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height ; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.”—Eph. iii. 18, 19.

One of the sublimest portions of God's word.  
 What majesty of thought and beauty of language.  
 How paradoxical his language becomes.  
 An attempt to express in words what is beyond the power  
 of language. Comp. Job xi. 8, 9.  
 Let us use these dimensions as stand-points.

## I. THE COMPREHENSIVE BREADTH OF CHRIST'S LOVE.

As broad as the glorious plan of salvation.  
 Love planned it. Love executed it.  
 Love impelled Christ forward, when His humanity shrank  
 back.  
 We see love everywhere inscribed on this plan.  
 Salvation not exclusively confined to Israel under the law,  
 but now the command is.  
 Jesus died for all mankind. Heb. ii. 9. 1 John ii. 2.  
 How else in 1 Tim. ii. 1—7, exhort to pray for *all*?  
 How else enforce argument in v. 5, “*one* mediator being  
 co-extensive with “one God”?  
 Where else find such an appeal as Rom. xiv. 15?  
 What doctrine can so vividly prove ingratitude?  
 Our privilege to proclaim a free salvation *to all*.  
 Can't reconcile election with it, yet both revealed.  
 Exhort all to accept this salvation.

## II. ITS EXTENDED AND ETERNAL LENGTHS.

Love is like Jehovah, “without beginning of days, &c.”  
 God a king before creation commenced.  
 To this period Christ points. Prov. viii. 23.  
 See His love exhibited in creation.  
 You see it in Paradise, in promise of “seed of woman,”  
 in Noah's ark, in the rainbow, in history of Jews.  
 You see it eminently in His incarnation, &c.  
 You see it since in care of His Church.  
 You may see it in your own preservation.

Go down stream of time and you may still see it.  
 Yea, see it in eternity.  
 Our joy here only the dim shadow of future bliss.  
 Our experience of Christ's love here, only like scanty scooping  
 of half-dried rivulet.  
 Love of God here like tropical plant growing in cold climate.  
 Who not seek interest in this everlasting love?

### III. ITS AMAZING AND UNFATHOMABLE DEPTHS.

If wicked "wise to do evil," *à fortiori*, Satan.  
 The master spirit of deceit, ever sowing tares.  
 Yet depths of Satan's deceit not too low for Christ.  
 Laid aside glory to become man.  
 But what kind of man? Surely a king!  
 No, "a worm," a malefactor, crucified.  
 Lower still, forsaken by God. Lam. i. 12.  
 Consider how low we are fallen.  
 Below the brutes, in sinning against our reason.  
 More miserable than brutes, for punishment eternal.  
 Below the devils, for "they believe and tremble."  
 Hardening himself in sin, man fits himself for hell.  
 Yet for such Christ died.  
 Cried "My God, &c." that no penitent may use such a cry.  
 Come then to Jesus. Isaiah i. 18.

### IV. ITS ELEVATED AND INCONCEIVABLE HEIGHTS.

Act of grace, if God were to save us from some consequences  
 of sin.  
 But never half does work, Eph. ii. 6.  
 Christ's love clung to us in His resurrection.  
 The pledge of ours. Col. ii. 12.  
 Rejoice in pardon secured, golden sceptre held out, kiss  
 of peace.  
 Boldness of access, partakers of Divine nature.  
 Can regard all things as theirs.  
 But eternity alone unfold heights to which love elevates  
 To be like elect angels, to see God, to be able to grasp  
 mysteries, surely this should quicken us, v. 19.  
 What do you know of this love?

## THE RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON.

"And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said unto her, weep not. And He came and touched the bier; and they that bare him stood still. And he said, young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother."—Luke vii. 13—15.

Christ's greatest miracle was the raising of the dead.

Perverse unbelief might plausibly profess to explain other miracles.

But to raise the dead clearly the work of Omnipotence.

Proves Him to be "the Resurrection and the Life."

Evangelists relate three such miracles.

Anticipations of, John v. 28, 29.

Our Lord had no need to say with Titus, "My friends,  
I have lost a day."

Yesterday healed centurion's servant, to-day dries widow's tears.

His journeys full of blessing.

Now comes to Nain "the lovely"—contrast funeral procession.

So the world's pleasantest scene no sanctuary which death cannot invade.

The world's great business is burying its dead.

"The air is full of farewells to the dying  
And mournings for the dead,  
The heart of Rachel for her children crying,  
Will not be comforted."

How soon is our Nain changed to Bochim.

But fate of Nain teaches more consoling lessons.

Shows us the Conqueror of death arresting its progress.

Affords proof of doctrine of special providence.

Christ's journey specially timed for the critical moment.

We are not under complex system of natural laws, but our times are in God's hands.

In very love He often makes our Nain a place of the dead.

Wait patiently on the Lord.

Consider how Christ—

# I. COMFORTS THE MOURNER.\* "Weep not."

In three strokes Luke paints picture of profound desolation.  
v. 12.

Her distress better conceived than described.

\* *Lange in loco.*

Eastern grief always loud, intensified in such a case as this.

Comp. Jer. vi. 26.

Evoked sympathy of her neighbours.

Still she was the only mourner there—crowd silent.

Hers a grief with which it were like sacrilege to intermeddle.

But Christ says gently, "weep not."

Contrast His language here with Mark v. 39.

Her husband's name extinct in Israel, so that she might have said, Ruth i. 20.

But Christ's words soothe her at once.

Let Christian mourners be comforted by these words.

He says to Rachel, Jer. xxxi. 16, 17.

Earthly comforter vainly say, "weep not," but Jesus makes good His promise, Rev. xxi. 4.

## II. RAISES THE DEAD. v. 14, 15.

The presence of Christ an exhibition of power. Comp. John xviii. 6.

Observe here, no parade of preparation.

The calmness of true dignity in His deportment.

Does not even betake Himself to prayer.

The dead had been raised before and since, but by a laborious effort.

Witness, 2 Kings iv. 33—35, and Acts ix. 40.

But not so with Christ.

Transforms a bier into a place of resurrection, a widow into a rejoicing mother, and a public highway into a sanctuary of God's glory.

Type of spiritual miracle, when voice of Jesus says, Eph. v. 14.

Means of grace inoperative till He speaks.

Man in a death-like sleep till call of Christ heard and obeyed.

Have you heard it?

Young men, has this miracle no meaning for you?

## III. UNITES THE SEPARATED. "He delivered him to his mother."

Reminds of similar acts of Elijah and Elisha.

Imagine rapture of widow.

To her it must have been as the renewing of her youth.

This union of the separated, Christ's peculiar work.

Causes of estrangement always in operation.

How often a thoughtless word leads to withdrawal of intercourse.

How often has a new home to be sought at a distance.

Who like Christ, unite these separated ones?

Let pious mothers muse thankfully on this miracle.

Let all God's people see here an illustration of "communion of saints."

### EZRA'S PULPIT.

"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."—Neh. viii. 8.

Ezra and Nehemiah associated.

Ezra's commission from Artaxerxes, Ezra vii. 14.

Only known as a learned and pious priest.

His object to effect a religious reformation.

His first step to make Jews put away heathen wives.

The list of these closes his book.

Nehemiah appointed Tirshatha by Artaxerxes.

Stirred up Jews to rebuild city and temple.

Seconded by Ezra in efforts to reform.

Plan adopted described in this chapter.

### **I. THE PLAN ADOPTED.** To let God speak for Himself.

Prominence given to plan marks this as transition period.

Book of law intended to be read from first.

But religious life of nation degenerated into stately ceremonialism.

Devotion to matters of ritual led to neglect of study of law, and then to apostacy.

Jehoshaphat and Josiah issued commissions to priests to teach law.

Only by Word of God could Nehemiah hope to effect real reformation.

In Babylon meetings of devout Jews frequent.

Now, though temple rising from ruins, such meetings too precious to be given up.

Here trace rise of synagogue.\*

\* Smith's Dict. of Bible, Art. Synagogue.

This in turn paved way for Christian Church.  
Both in Synagogue and Church reading of God's Word prominent.

Though a "house of prayer," yet where Scriptures to be read. *Text.*

Picture scene.

First mention of "pulpit," v. 4.

Then the book, v. 5. Put before them as text book.

God here recorded His will in a permanent form.

This alone, our authority and standard.

Ezra does not point to tradition.

Does not awe by priestly authority.

As Lord's freeman, take our stand on Scriptures.

Mark too, reverence with which treats it.

Bible no common book, to be handled reverently.

Rationalists denounce us as Bibliolaters.

Their contempt of volume extends to contents.

Be on your guard.

Then care to "read distinctly," &c.

Obvious importance of this.

Policy of Church of Rome to banish Scripture altogether.

Ritualists read in a low monotonous tone.

Conduct of Ezra a standing protest.

Once more, "caused to understand reading."

That is, they expounded the law and its bearings.

Difficulties in Scripture. 2 Pet. iii. 16.

Therefore Rome speaks of Bible as dangerous book.

Her character as Antichrist, by opposition to John v. 39.

That command our warrant and encouragement.

Promises of aid, Hos. vi. 3, John vii. 17, Ps. xxv. 9.

Then there is the Holy Spirit.

And also the Church. See Art. XX.

Ministers of Church to be applied to. Mal. ii. 7.

This our commission, to point you to Word.

Then confer true nobility, as Acts xvii. 11; and say as

1 Thes. ii. 13.

## II. THE OBJECT DESIGNED—to secure God's blessing on nation.

They had not profited by past discipline.

But seventy years' captivity had taught a stern lesson.

Moses had said, Deut. vi. 25.

But no, ritual of Baal, Moloch, &c., fascinated them.

Then wrath descended, till repented.

Same round of sinning, suffering, and repenting repeated  
till captivity in Babylon effectually weaned them from  
idolatry.

Reading of the law eminently contributed to this.

Also to give more elevating conceptions of nature of  
communion with God.

Sinner in approaching God needs propitiation—sense of guilt.

Book of law deepens this, so that no wonder v. 9.

But Ezra points to promises as well as threatenings of law.

Therefore says v. 10.

Apply this to ourselves.

Acquire equanimity, look to God with confidence, &c.

Learn in Word efficacy of Christ's atonement.

"Rejoice in Lord alway."

## THE LESSONS OF HARVEST.

"He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest."—Jer. v. 24.

Blindness of heart a nation's greatest curse.

Its effect, the disorganization of the body politic.

This evident from both ancient and modern history.

Fearful picture of results in this chapter.

Unfaithful in dealings. Marriage tie violated. Word of  
God set aside.

No gratitude or obedience to covenant God.

Equally true of England in present day.

Prevalent scepticism, dethroning God for laws of nature.

Well may prophet say, vs. 23, 24.

Consider lessons of harvest ;

## I. AS REGARDS GOD.

(1). It speaks of power.

Evidences of His power everywhere.

Earthquake, &c., witness to it. v. 22.

But operations of nature equally bear witness.

Take a grain of wheat, and think of power needed for its  
germination.

This on extended scale, till "valleys stand." Ps. lxx. 13.

This power cannot be imitated.

Power wielded by parental love.  
 Equally careful to provide spiritual food.  
 Grains of wheat point to Christ. John xii. 24.  
 Power which quickens buried corn, raised Christ.  
 Take care that it has quickened you.  
 Made you part of produce. Rev. vii. 14.

(2). *It speaks of faithfulness.*

Picture desolation of earth when Noah left ark.  
 Received same commission as Adam, but with misgiving.  
 What assurance that another flood might not come?  
 Gen. viii. 21, 22. Challenge sceptic to prove its violation.  
 Character of seasons has varied, atmospherical influences in  
 different combinations.  
 Yet God's faithfulness unimpeached—rainbow as witness.  
 When God would revive people, appeals to this. Is. liv.  
 9, 10.  
 Refreshing to turn to promise like this.  
*Text*, though elements unpropitious, though some crops  
 failed, yet not in vain prayed "give us daily bread."  
 Comforts those in straitened circumstances.  
 Cast selves on God's faithfulness. Is. xxxiii. 16.  
 Higher blessings to be obtained. 1 John ii. 25.

## II. AS REGARDS OURSELVES.—Our responsibility.

Ours "a set time," during which sow seed.  
 Principles developing for comfort or torment hereafter.  
 The harvest depends on seed we sow.  
 Law uniform in natural and spiritual world.  
 Harvest proportionate in quality and quantity to seed sown.  
 Gal. vi. 7, 8. What seed are you sowing.  
 No right to be surprised if harvest of "weeping and  
 gnashing of teeth."  
 There is a sowing to the flesh.  
 Worldly man attains wealth or power, reaps reward.  
 But consider price he has paid.  
 Mental degradation, hardness of heart, &c.  
 His harvest now, sinful indulgence, worldly applause, &c.  
 But yet another harvest beyond. "God not mocked."  
 Weeks of harvest fast running out.  
 Glorious reward awaiting believers.  
 They have provided selves with "bags which wax not old."



Come to Christ. Though despised, His seed not sown in vain.  
 Cultivate spirit of Captain of salvation. Col. iii. 12.  
 Seed sown for Christ cannot perish.  
 Sow seed of faith. John v. 24.  
 Sow seed of obedience.  
 Sow seed of repentance. Ps. cxxvi. 5, Matt. v. 4.  
 Sow seed of renunciation of world. Matt. xix. 28, 29.  
 Sow seed of liberality.

## THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Eph. iv. 1.

Paul's tender regard for his converts.  
 Increased now by circumstances in which he was placed.  
 In Rome, waiting the arrival of his accusers.  
 But these in no hurry—prosecution had already broken down. Comp. Acts xxvi. 32.  
 Paul treated with consideration. Chained to Roman soldier.  
 Able to preach the Gospel—his chains added weight to His appeals. Phil. i. 12, 14.  
 Who could have seen without emotion "Paul the aged" thus manacled?  
 But for others at a distance he was equally solicitous.  
 On them he could urge no more effective exhortation than *text*.

**I. HE REMINDS THEM OF THE NATURE OF THEIR CALLING.**

Word "vocation" constantly used by Paul.  
 Implies a principle of obedience implanted, as well as call uttered.  
 It springs from God's foreknowledge.  
 It is addressed to believers, *text*.

**(1.) It is a high calling.**

This summons comes from God.  
 Conversion the result of no call from pulpit or platform.  
 It is that which Abram heard 4,000 years ago.  
 It rings incessantly in ears of those who have heard it, so that Phil. iii. 14.

When he dwelt in Mesech, heard by sinner, whose motto  
now is "excelsior."  
Raises him to pre-eminence and moral dignity.  
A call from death to life—from earth to heaven.

(2.) It is a holy calling. 2 Tim. i. 9.

A call to separate themselves from polluting influences of  
the world.

As vessels of sanctuary were set apart, so believers.

Aim at obedience to Divine rule, 1 Pet. i. 16.

They maintain a conscience void of offence.

This regarded as Utopian, especially by business men.

Yet this the standard of God's word.

Seek to rise up to full enjoyment of Christian privilege.

## II. HE URGES THEIR DUTY IN CONSEQUENCE.

It implies that they have heard the call, and understand  
its nature.

"Worthy" denotes an exact equivalent, like corresponding  
weights in a balance.

Thus Matt. iii. 8 (margin)—Phil i. 27 (1st clause).

I have shown you riches of God's grace, depths of His  
love, &c., and now *text*.

(1.) It implies that we live in the habitual consciousness of God's  
presence.

Even idle servants work while conscious of master's eye.

But we are not servants, but sons.

To walk with God, as Enoch, our great safeguard. Gen.  
xxxix. 9.

Evident advantages of such a walk.

(2.) It implies that we carefully cultivate all Christian graces.

This Paul urges here, v. 2 and 3.

Qualities regarded by the world with contempt.

We are charged to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

If Christ stooped so low for us, how can we be filled with  
pride?

If He is our peace, how can we give way to temper?

If God borne with our provocations, how can we exhibit  
impatience one with another?

(3.) It implies that we zealously prosecute all Christian duties.

Vocation implies also working in his vineyard.

Alas, too many Christians are mere camp followers of the army of Christ.

They are parasites which cling like ivy to the oak.

They are the hearers but not doers of the Word.

Why should you disgrace the name of honesty and Christian manliness?

Are there not sick to be visited, &c.?

God bends from out the deep and says—

I gave thee the great gift of life,

Wast thou not called in many ways?

Are not my heaven and earth at strife?

I gave thee of my seed to sow,

Bringest thou me thy hundredfold?

Can you look up with face a-glow

And answer, Father, here is gold?\*

O for impassioned fervour of Paul that our appeal may find echo in your hearts!

### THE OBEDIENCE OF THE RECHABITES.

“ But they said, We will drink no wine ; for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever ; neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards, nor have any ; but all your days ye shall dwell in tents ; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.”—Jer. xxxv. 6, 7.

An interesting episode in the history of the chosen people.

The divine ingenuity well nigh exhausted in devising expedients to awaken their deadened consciences.

Now the beginning of the end—Jerusalem in a state of siege.

Surrounding population swept into doomed city, as afterwards in days of Titus.

Among them a tribe of Arab Bedouins.

Jeremiah invites these ascetics to drink.

Appeals to Israel and says v. 14.

Consider the nature of their obedience.

\* J. R. Lowell's poems.

**I. IT WAS TRUE FILIAL OBEDIENCE.**

Enough told of Jonadab to show he was no ordinary man.  
 Maintained no ordinary reputation for sterling integrity.  
 One of a tribe closely connected with Jews, both religiously  
 and politically.

During Israel's apostacy, maintained old patriarchal simplicity.

The veneration in which he was regarded by his contemporaries, evidenced by Jehu's conduct. 2 Kings x, 15.

Such the man whom His descendants delighted to obey.

No obedience so hearty, real, and generous as filial obedience.  
 A true son knows his interests identical with his father's.

Thus God appeals, as our Father in Christ, saying, "Give me thy heart."

He has invested this relationship with solemn sanctions, and guarded it by stern threatenings.

Obedience to parents connecting link of tables of decalogue.  
 Solomon declares, Prov. xxx. 17.

In New Testament enforced and illustrated by Christ.  
 John xvii. 4.

This God requires, for no charge of parental sternness lies at His door.

Points to unworthy contrast, v. 14.

Think of this, lest He should say, Mal. i. 6.

**II. IT WAS AN ENLIGHTENED OBEDIENCE.**

The Rechabites were sensible men, who appreciated wisdom of injunction of their ancestor.

Jonadab had watched progress of demoralization in Israel.  
 He desired that his posterity should preserve their ancient family character.

Knew tendency of men in crowded cities to throw off restraint.

Absurd now to try to follow this primitive mode of life.

This part of His injunctions susceptible of modification,  
 v. 11.

In crowded cities, sin multiplied.

Our great cities seething masses of vice and infidelity.

Keep aloof from its theatres, &c.

If your neighbours live in sin, remember Exod. xxiii. 2.

When asked to imitate them, reply Gen. xxxix. 9.

But one part admitted no relaxation, v. 6.

Living in a land of the vine. Judges ix. 13.

But knew mischief resulting from acquiring taste for such drink.

"Drunkards of Ephraim" only too notorious.

He saw the vice demoralizing all classes of society. Comp. Is. xxviii. 7, 8.

Drunkenness and bestiality synonymous.

Surely we need to re-echo Jonadab's charge.

Drunkenness the crying sin of England.

What do magistrates say is the great source of crime?

Strong drink.

What is the great cause of poverty? Strong drink.

What destroys the peace and comfort of home? Strong drink.

What robs a man or woman of self-respect? Strong drink.

What neutralizes all the efforts of Christian ministers? Strong drink.

Why pursue inquiries like these?

If address any with whom it is a besetting sin, urge total abstinence.

You will be a gainer in every respect by doing so.

Now put question of use or non-use of intoxicating drinks on true Scriptural footing.

Scripture nowhere condemns their use in moderation Comp. 1 Tim. iv. 4 and v. 23. John ii. 10.

Would any charge our Lord with being the minister of sin?

But others abstained like the Nazarites and these Rechabites.

Total abstainers ought therefore not to judge uncharitably their non-abstaining Christian brethren.

Seek for aid of Holy Spirit to render enlightened obedience to God's commands.

Sin must be put away, or we are condemned by our baptismal vows.

As sons of God, must do our father's will.

If not, these Rechabites rise against us in judgment, and behold a greater than Jonadab is here.

## NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM.

"And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."—Mark xii. 34.\*

Cogency of our Lord's reasoning confessed even by His enemies.

Some of them more candid than others.

So this Scribe—approves Christ's reasoning.

His question, v. 28, answered by Christ.

Commands his delighted assent, so that he says v. 32, 33.

Grateful testimony this from such a quarter, *text*.

A very suggestive statement.

Seems to conflict with doctrine of man's total depravity.

If all dead, how can some be nearer the kingdom?

But though all outside, yet surely there may be degrees of approximation to the truth.

When whole hemisphere dark, eastern part will first receive light.

So some situations may afford greater facilities, &c.

Such persons not converted, all you can say is *text*.

## I. WHAT BRINGS PERSONS NEARER THE KINGDOM?

(1.) When brought in direct contact with believers. So this Scribe.

There are among us living counterparts of Jesus.

You can hardly fail to regard such with awe.

Are you not thus brought sensibly nearer the kingdom?

You can then test Christianity in its results.

Strange thoughts thrill through you as you contrast such persons with yourself.

A solemn thing to be placed in this position !

You stand on threshold over which these have passed.

What hinders you from following them ? Nothing.

The same voice speaks to you, the Word nigh, and yet *text*.

(2.) Some kinds of disposition bring nearer.

When unconverted display spirit of reverence for divine things. So this Scribe.

Such more receptive of divine truth.

Scoffer regards wit and railery as unanswerable arguments.

\* *Vide* Sermons, by Rev. John Ker, (Hamilton).

But to ridicule what is beyond comprehension argues a weak intellect ; "fools rush in," &c.

Also weakens understanding, for deals untruthfully with truth, banishes candour and fairness.

A spirit of mockery fastens on weak points of truth's citadel.

He whose good sense preserves him from all this is more hopeful character.

May be light-hearted, but will have serious moments when *text*.

(3.) Again amiability of disposition brings nearer.

So young ruler—no dissolute rake, earnest-minded young man.

Have we not met with such, the delight of the home circle ?

Christ's estimate of such favourable. Mark x. 21.

Gospel which enjoins Phil. iv. 8 welcomed by such.

Already a flower which hardly needs transplanting.

But if wild flower so beautiful, what grace will it not exhibit in Christ's garden.

Virtues mark him out as jewel for Immanuel's diadem.

We think it strange not cast in lot with Christ, since say *text*.

## II. WHAT IS FURTHER NEEDED TO BRING WITHIN THE KINGDOM.

A serious defect in world's view of amiability, &c.

Such never felt godly sorrow for sin.

Recognize claims of law, but unconscious of its spirituality.

View Christ as One on same level with themselves.

Never bowed before Him as Revealer of the Father.

Never entered fellowship of His sufferings.

Defect lies in want of two things.

(1.) A new birth. John iii. 3.

He must feel that natural life can never furnish with means of setting self right with God.

Fountain impure, stream defiled.

Deadened conscience unconscious of yawning gulf.

Sight of the crucified One alone awaken him. Job. xlii. 5, 6.

Till this effected, you are outside.

This the door of the ark ; the change must be real. John ix. 25.

Its pivot will be the new view acquired of sin.

Passed from natural to supernatural, so that not true *text*.

(2.) **A new life.** The outflow of the former.

Alliance with Christ. Jer. xxxii. 40.

Salvation consists of three things, a sight, a fear, a trust.

Take care it is thus with you, life then more glorious aspect.

Future fate of Scribe not revealed to impress us with salutary awe.

Believe in Lord Jesus Christ *now*. Don't wait for crisis.

Gospel now preached ; " the kingdom of God nigh you."

## THE SECOND ADVENT.

" Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Cor. i. 7.

The work of Christ occupies largest part of Apostle's creed. Naturally so, for the Church indebted to Christ for all.

She professes her belief in various stages of His life.

Concludes by expressing her belief in His Second Advent.

Each statement of the Creed has its peculiar value.

All are dovetailed together—each one is dear to us.

Yet the last is the pearl and crown of the rest.

On this the primitive Christians dwelt, *text*.

Scandalous excesses in Church of Corinth for which

Paul rebukes them.

Yet characteristically begins with language of praise, vs. 4—7.

Mentions this as climax, *text*.

Show influence Second Advent naturally excites.

## I. ON CHRISTIAN FAITH.

Believer's walk described. 2 Cor. v. 7.

We have not seen Jesus, but convinced of reality of His existence.

The four Gospels bring Him bodily as it were before us.

We watch with the eleven His Ascension. Acts i. 2.

To this promise intelligent Christian faith clings.

Its language clear—asserts personal identity of Christ.

" This *same* Jesus " shall come, and in the *same* manner.

Since His Ascension no eye seen Him, but Stephen's and Paul's.

His residence in heaven must have etherealized His physical frame.



This sin stained earth unfit for His residence.

Yet there is to be a literal, corporeal, local descent of the man Christ Jesus.

May be much now to cast discredit on promise.

Christians have exposed themselves to ridicule by guessing at date of its fulfilment.

The ungodly point to false guesses, and harden themselves.

Nay, Scripture foretells that some Christians will abandon this Article of the Creed. Matt. xxiv. 48.

This want of faith generates a scoffing spirit. 2 Pet. iii. 4.

But to believe this article furnishes evidence of spiritual life. 1 Thess. i. 9, 10.

Let us cling fast to this promise.

## II. ON CHRISTIAN HOPE.

Hope must be based upon faith.

Hope excited by conviction of reality and desirability of object.

Prospect of Christ's Second Advent a joyous one.

His first Advent a source of blessing—longed for.

His second a still more desirable event.

Conceptions of waiters for first Advent vague, ours clear.

Signal for final removal of curse—2 Thess. ii. 8—in-gathering of Israel—blessings on Church at large.

Order in which these take place uncertain.

Christians differ in modes of interpretation.

All agree in longing for its speedy realization.

Here *text*—"waiting" not listlessly. Job vii. 2 (Septuag.)

1 Thess. i. 10.

Hope thus exerts a two-fold influence.

(1.) It strengthens patience. James v. 8.

(2.) Produces a purifying effect. Titus ii. 11—13, 1 John iii. 3.

When Forerunner returns, His people will say "it is good to be here."

The revelation of Christ's glory—Is it our hope?

## III. ON CHRISTIAN LOVE.

Love kindled by God's love.

Increased in proportion to degree of acquaintance with Christ.

His attractive power marvellous. Cant. i. 3.

If sight a higher privilege than faith, how natural to desire  
His return.

Love prompted Him to ascend. John xvi. 7.

If His departure so rich in blessing what must His return  
be ?

In view of it the Apostle could say, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Are we of that number ?

A test of the reality of our spiritual life.

On that event our eyes ought to be fixed. Ps. cxxiii. 2.

“The end of all things is at hand.”

As we read Scripture we discern signs of His coming.

Promise to be immediately fulfilled. Rev. xxii. 20.

Keep it before you.

The Second Advent no visionary theory.

Pray that it may be hastened. 2 Thess. iii. 5.

The wheels of His chariot linger,  
That thine may the privilege be  
To worship, while others dishonour—  
To trust, while thou yet canst not see.  
Long, long !—O how long, has hope been deferred ;  
But thy tears are all counted, thy prayers are all heard.\*

### EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION.

“And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear ; for they are most rebellious.” Ezek. ii. 7.

The high dignity of an ambassador of Christ.

To realize it, one must enter into spirit of the calling.

Much opposition to encounter—little apparent honour to be  
gained.

So the ancient prophets found.

The spirit of apostacy displayed by Israel, something mar-  
vellous.

Consciousness of guilt embittered them against prophets.

Thus Jerusalem became the Aceldama of the prophets,  
Luke xii. 42.

Ezekiel now called to this office.

God deals unreservedly with him—tells him of the opposi-  
tion he must meet.

\* Hymns and thoughts in verse, by E. A. W. (W. Hunt & Co.)

## II. THE PROPHET'S COMMISSION.

To consider himself the mouthpiece of Jehovah.  
The living water to contract no pollution from human channel.

This rule strictly adhered to—*e.g.* Balaam, Caiaphas.  
But Ezekiel was to be no unwilling instrument. *Text.*

This rule applies to all God's ministers.

Only thus expect to find (1) comfort and (2) success in our ministry.

### (1.) We want to realize comfort in its exercise.

The office a responsible and harassing one.  
Sense of weakness and fear often oppress us.  
But one comfort is, we speak God's word.  
Present age fertile in novel interpretations of Scripture,  
sets aside cardinal doctrines of Gospel.  
These views ably put forth, intelligent men captivated by them.

But in opposition to them we speak God's word, and are sure it will vindicate its authority, and assert its power.

Thus when they say, only live honestly and you will reap an eternal reward, we reply John iii. 3.

It matters not what creed you profess. Acts iv. 12.

Jesus Christ was a mere man who died a martyr to the truth—John i. 1—12, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

The dogma of eternal punishment is a revolting one—Ps. ix. 17, Matt. xxv. 46.

Public worship must be clothed with ritualistic pomp—John ii. 24.

Verily we shall prove but false prophets, if we lose sight of tenor of our commission.

Then all comfort lost, as carried about by every wind of doctrine, we exclaim

But what am I,  
An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry.

Not so, ours not the language of childish imbecility, for we can say 1 Cor. ii. 13.

(2.) Thus we shall be successful in our ministry.

All look for success in the undertaking they engage in.

We want to see souls saved, &c.

Alas, not always see this, for say with prophet Is. lxxv. 2.

Forced to say of misguided sinners "they are like the deaf adder," &c.

In such cases it is well to remember charge received, *text*.

In blaming ourselves, we perpetuate failure by losing sight of source of success.

That lies in this Divine Word.

What does God say of it? Jer. xxiii. 28.

What then have we to do with fears or forebodings.

## II. THE CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE TO WHOM HE WAS SENT.

Said at outset, we must enter into spirit of calling.

No galley slave more miserable than an unconverted minister of Christ.

Such men listless, idle, unworthy.

They don't stand in breach, adapt themselves to evil tendencies of age in which they live.

It wants a man of God to proclaim His message to a world lying in wickedness.

Jer. xv. 16, and it was this which urged him forward.

To Is. xxx. 10. Anodyne of false peace.

Pleasant to stand high in good opinion of the flock, but remember Luke vi. 26.

Ah, this recalls us to sense of duty, reminds us God's word must give pain, since proclaimed to a rebellious people.

In every age of world, this description of mankind true.

Yet our self-love pained by such a charge.

We go to church regularly, subscribe to charities, &c., why then style us a rebellious people?

Because God's word says so, we bound to reiterate it.

But let us see is this epithet deserved or not.

He who denies justice of this reproach, is ignorant of depravity of own heart.

Need to deal faithfully with each other.

Let us look fairly into the Divine Word, as in a glass.

Here see ourselves indeed vile, but in Jesus, perfect.

Here find Jesus speaking in grace.

Speak thus to-night, gracious Saviour.

## ASSOCIATION WITH THE GODLY.

"Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, saith the Lord God, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness."—Ezek. xiv. 20.

This prophecy contains mournful disclosures of Israel's spiritual condition.

Denunciations of Jeremiah began to be fulfilled.

Part of the nation in captivity, part at home vainly struggling against Assyria.

Both clung to idea that the existence of so many pious Israelites would prevent God punishing the nation.

Jeremiah had exposed unsoundness of this reasoning, xv. 1.

Now Ezekiel takes up note sounded by older prophet, *text*.

Intended as answer to inquiry of elders.

The answer consists of two parts.

(1.) An exposure of their hypocrisy, v. 3.

God says they deserve to be deceived, for they have dethroned God and set aside rule of Divine counsel.

God ever punishes sin with sin. 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.

(2.) A more direct answer to inquiry from v. 12.

They admitted truth of prophet's representations.

But argued that godly remnant must tell favourably on the method of God's dealings with nation and land.

Answer furnished by *text*, suggesting important considerations.

## I. THE ADVANTAGE OF ASSOCIATION WITH GODLY PERSONS.

Ezekiel does not disallow this.

To cultivate society of godly, is to impart healthy tone to our own morals.

Society a network of reciprocal influences.

Each one putting forth a silent power which helps to mould others.

The closer our walk with God, the mightier the influence we exert.

A believer commands your respect, draws you towards him, constrains you to put a restraint on yourself.

Virtue armed with an indisputable authority.

Must be advantageous to be connected with "the salt of the earth."

But also secures participation in their privileges.

Believers under peculiar protection of the Most High.  
 Events arranged for their safe keeping, as if God were saying  
 Ps. cv. 15.  
 In their security others share.  
 Relationship to Abraham saved Lot. Gen. xix. 29.  
 Companionship with Paul saved crew of ship in the Adriatic.  
 Accidents often due to recklessness of hardened reprobates.  
 The self-willed collier causes explosion by his carelessness.  
 Christians careful how expose themselves and others.  
 Our wisdom to be associated with the upright. Prov. ii. 21.

## II. INSUFFICIENCY OF MERE ASSOCIATION WITH THE GODLY.

Few would assert that membership with a pious family is a  
 guarantee of union with Christ.  
 Yet an idea of this kind possesses some professing Christians.  
 Think they are within the verge of a charmed circle.  
 This idea fostered by the Church of Rome.  
 With her, the Church is an external organization, outside  
 whose pale there is no salvation.  
 A demoralizing doctrine—begets false security—deadens  
 spirituality.  
 This idea at the root of Jewish pride of descent from  
 Abraham.  
 Combated by Paul, Rom. ix. 8, and John Baptist, Matt. iii. 9.  
 So with too many now, religion consists of mere formal  
 membership with visible Church.  
 But religion consists in communion of soul with God.  
 There is a solitude of soul before God, admitting intervention  
 of no third party.  
 Union with Christ a matter of personal experience.  
 Not say simply Christ died for sinners, but He died for *me*.  
 Has He healed plague of my heart, &c.  
 This what we want. Job xix. 25—27.  
 I must know Him for myself, and not by testimony of saints,  
 like Noah, &c.  
 In the great day they cannot help me, no oil to spare.

## III. THE DISCRIMINATION AND ACCURACY OF THE DIVINE JUDGMENT.

When calamities described in this chapter occur, a scene of  
 wild confusion.  
 Then wild runnings to and fro, &c.

Instinct of self-preservation would prompt us to say, I may find means of escape.

Instances of hair-breadth escapes occur in most catastrophes. But in great day of the Lord, no chance of escape.

True, then some will glorify the Lord in the fires, but these will be His elect.

Saints like Noah, &c.

They shall deliver their own souls, no jewel wanting.

But different with mere formal professors.

Shall these escape just judgment of the Almighty?

Though dwellers in the Holy City, of what avail when Zeph. i. 12?

They may have fair outside show, but Matt. vii. 22, 23.

They may be enrolled as servants and friends, but Matt. xxii. 11.

A subject for earnest personal inquiry.

Let nothing come between you and Christ.

Friends like Noah, &c., of no avail; your cry must be,  
"None but Christ, none but Christ."

### THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."—Eph. iv. 30.

This epistle rich in Christian experience.

Apostle regards church at Ephesus as sample of the church universal.

He sets forth (1) its foundation, (2) its course, (3) its scope. These, again, rest on the offices of the Trinity.\*

In dwelling on its scope, he does not overlook checks. The theatre of its warfare is the world, its soldiers are imperfect Christians.

Hence arise abuses and disorders, against which warns Ephesians.

There breaks off, to remind them of calling, *text*.

Language framed on Old Testament. Is. lxiii. 10; Ps. lxxviii. 40, 41.

The Holy Spirit is the privilege of the Church. The promised gift of a departed Saviour.

\* Alford's Prolegomena to Epistle, sect. iii.

His influence ever exerted for instruction, consolation and sanctification.

His great office to take of the things of Christ, and show them to His people.

Thus He becomes the witness of sonship, the earnest of inheritance, and the seal by which God's image stamped.

To enjoy Christ, therefore, we must cultivate indwelling of Holy Ghost.

This the apostle urges here, addressing the spiritually-minded.

"Grieve" is, of course, a word of accommodation.

Remind the children of God—

## I. OF THEIR PRIVILEGE.

Sealing a token of authenticity of document.

Recognized as property of person who sealed them.

Christ thus sealed. John vi. 27.

All who are built on Christ thus sealed. 2 Tim. ii. 19.

This sealing follows reception of Christ in hearts. Eph. i. 13.

Seal of Spirit bears image and superscription of Christ.

Thus serves a threefold purpose.

(1.) It recognizes believers as property of God.

Christ purchased them. Mal. iii. 17.

Believers rejoice in consciousness of interest in Christ.

(2.) It designates them for the service of God.

Injunction never lost sight of, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

See that ye remember end of your calling.

(3.) It appropriates them for the inheritance of God.

For these sealed ones has the Forerunner entered within veil.

For these He is preparing mansions.

This glorious destiny reconciles believers to crosses.

Theirs may have been a life of poverty, &c., but *sealed*.

Sealed too, not partially, or for limited period, but *text*.

To that day a groaning world looks forward.

The day when God will display His full-orbed glory.

The day of manifestation of sons of God.

Think of your glorious privilege.



## II. OF THEIR DUTY. "Grieve not," &c.

Force of this duty felt when privilege realized.  
 No mention of final apostacy or withdrawal of Spirit.  
 The appeal not to their fears, but to their gratitude.\*  
 If He has sealed you, how can you grieve Him?  
 Represents Spirit under figure of a friend.  
 His argument therefore an *à fortiori* one.  
 Let it have all its weight on our minds.  
 How do we grieve the Spirit?

### (1.) By neglecting the exercise of prayer.

Prayer confession of dependence; setting seal to God's truth; means of communion; expression of delight in His service.

If no prayer, then fire on altar gone out.

### (2.) By tampering with monitions of conscience.

Conscience God's vicegerent; our monitor; the light within.  
 If conscience silenced, or evaded, then Spirit grieved.

### (3.) By departing from the simplicity of the faith.

Some imagine Gospel needs improvement to suit an enlightened age.

Forebodings of the apostle now fulfilled. 1 Tim. iv. 1.

When we distrust plain teaching of God's Word, then Spirit grieved.

Then come painful doubts, grievous falls, &c.

Address those who have not the Spirit.

If God's sealed ones sharply dealt with, what must be your fate? 1 Pet. iv. 17.

Address those who are sealed.

## GOD'S COMMAND AND REMONSTRANCE.

"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?—Ezekiel xviii. 31.

God vindicating righteous character of His dealings.

Disposition to blame others and arraign God.

Jews attributed misfortunes to their fathers.

Passed into a proverb, v. 2.

\* *Vide Eadie's Commentary in loco.*

But God here pleads His own cause.

His righteous mode of administration exhibited in a series of examples.

Principle on which His treatment based in v. 20 (1st part).

Curse hereditary because guilt hereditary.

Put away guilt, and I will visit with blessing.

But not partial reformation, therefore *text*.

## I. A COMMAND.

Expressed (1) negatively, (2) positively.

So Isaiah i. 16, 17, and Eph. iv. 22—24.

To show how thorough the reformation demanded.

(1). **Negatively.**—Addressed to God's people.

Sin opposed to God, therefore world not at harmony with Him.

Sin entails two evils (1) guilt, (2) weakness.

First put away by Christ's sacrifice, Eph. i. 7, 1 John i. 7—9.

But question recurs, is *my* guilt purged?

How answer except by obeying injunction of *text*.

Christ a Saviour from *power* of sin. Matt. i. 21.

Required to part with sin for ever.

Though dear as a right hand or eye, to be put away.

No exception for darling sin, for command absolute.

(2). **Positively.**—"Make you a new heart, &c."

Is it not a mockery when addressed to sinners?

Inconsistent with Jer. xiii. 23?

Contradict prophet elsewhere, comp. chap. xxxvi. 26?

To make a new heart is to exercise creative power.

But instead of stumbling at apparent inconsistency, obey it.

Remember grace does not operate mechanically.

God requires intelligent co-operation with him.

With God's elect as with Christ in the grave, raised by God's power and His own.

Folly of not obeying seen, if apply reasoning to every day affairs.

It is God who feeds and sustains me, why should I feed and sustain myself?

Difficulties which we set aside in nature, made grave questions in religion.

After all, "a new heart" is the one grand essential.

"The root of the matter" must be in us.

Height of requirement shows how hopeless is own strength.

Therefore throw selves on power of Divine grace.  
 Thus command made instrument for conferring grace.  
 Then obey, for not straitened in God but in yourselves.

## II. A REMONSTRANCE.—Touching and startling.

Each word emphatic.

“*Why* will ye die” when salvation provided.

“*Why*” expresses perplexity. Same as Isaiah v. 4.

“*Why will ye die,*” throwing blame on sinner.

Will of God benevolent. 1 Thess. iv. 3. John vi. 39.

Who then to blame but the sinner?

Let him not say I am predestined to damnation.

God says such a representation is a calumny.

Luke xiii. 34. The “I will” and “ye will not” always contrasted.

“*Why will ye die*” whom I have created in My own image.

For whom I have given my Son to die.

Who are My own inheritance “the house of Israel.”

To whom revealed Myself as a Father. Is. i. 2.

“*Why will ye die*” for nothing short of this.

Already dying, for life no life apart from God.

Man out of true orbit, involves all in ruin.

To such God says, why seek in yourself what it cannot supply?

Only by entire renovation escape doom. *Text.*

Let these words ring in ears.

Seek for Holy Spirit to become, 2 Cor. v. 17.

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## THE WEDDING GARMENT.

“And when the king came in to see the guests he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot and take him away and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—Matt. xxii. 11–13.

One of a series of parables of judgment.

Contention between the Jews and the Messiah at climax.

Conflict commences with a miracle of judgment.

Then three parables of judgment.

This divided into three acts or stages.

The first points to overthrow of Jewish nation. vs. 3–7.

The second presents a picture of our present position.  
vs. 8—10.

The third points to the future great day of discrimination.  
Thus Christ warns not only contemporaries, but us.  
Here God's treatment of the hypocrite.

## I. HIS PRESUMPTION.

Imagery familiar to hearers. Oriental custom.

But some point rather to Zeph. i. 7, 8.

"Strange apparel" may have reference to Baal's "vestments."

But in either case, it is clear the guests were offered wedding garments.

This man proud, self-satisfied, self-righteous.

How many such in our Christian assemblies.

How little they dream that theirs' an unhallowed intrusion  
as Job. i. 6. Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31.

They are traitors who dishonour cause.

This presumption generated by ignorance of what sin is.

Respectable, virtuous persons, whose garments not filthy,  
therefore fit for the feast.

Yet no excuse, for Scripture says the old man is corrupt.  
Gospel benefits conferred in accordance with Gospel rules.

But what is this wedding garment?

Some say, faith, charity, baptism, &c.

But true key in Rom. xiii. 14.

Christ set forth as "the Lord our righteousness."

The expression "put on" constantly employed in Scripture.

See also Rev. xix. 7, 8. Compare Rev. vii. 14.

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Put on formally in baptism, Gal. iii. 27.

But this not enough, for baptism only "represents unto us  
our profession." *Vide* Baptismal Service.

This guest wanted true faith.

## II. HIS DETECTION. v. 11.

No part of servant's duty to examine guests.

Yet they would certainly warn filthy of his unfitness.

Still some escape observation, others difficult to be distinguished.

Only when the king came in.  
 Our duty not to pronounce judgment.  
 To do so a violation of Matt. xiii. 29, 30, and a taking up  
 sword of Antichrist.  
 Yet our duty to warn ungodly.  
 Also duty to warn all to prepare for personal inspection.  
 The king "will lay judgment to the line."  
 When does the king come in to see guests ?  
 At great day of final judgment.  
 But even now, conscious of being subjected to inspection.  
 When brought face to face with death, hear "Friend," &c.  
 Under conviction of Word, conscience says "Friend," &c.  
 Irony in the word "friend."  
 As only one guest, it is suggested it points to Judas.  
 But for us, a cause for strict personal inquiry.

### III. HIS PUNISHMENT. v. 12.

Contrast between peace of seared conscience and terror of  
 judge.  
 Sinner helpless in day of account.  
 An awful punishment to contemplate.  
 Highly retributive in its form. (See Trench.)  
 Not dwell on this painful subject, rather appeal.  
 As sinners come as you are.  
 But not remain as you are.  
 Wearing Christ's robe on heart, you will not be speechless.

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### THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT.

"Be filled with the Spirit."—Eph. v. 18.

The contrast with the preceding paragraph suggests a remote resemblance.  
 Try to catch the train of thought in the Apostle's mind.  
 He is addressing persons lately converted from heathenism.  
 He charges them v. 11, yet knowing how common a vice  
 intemperance was, he says v. 18 (first part.)  
 Show appropriateness of the term "excess" or "dissoluteness."  
 What lures the drunkard to drown his reason ?

To get rid of morbid depression by the exhilaration of the wine cup.

Yet he fails, for in a worse condition when fumes of alcohol evaporated.

The Apostle says, you will never succeed by such means but *text*.

He will give you unalloyed cheerfulness, and abiding peace.

And as under influence of wine, the tongue of the drunkard is loosened, so here v. 18, 19.

Now consider.

## I. WHAT THE TEXT IMPLIES.

That the Spirit has been largely given to the Church.

We speak of the present age as "the dispensation of the Spirit."

Yet operation constantly referred to in Old Testament.

Gen. i. 2, xli. 38, Exod. xxxv. 31, 2 Pet. i. 21.

But they looked for His fuller manifestation at a future period.

Fulfilled at Pentecost. Acts ii. 16—21.

The principle of the earlier dispensation was "isolation," of the later, "catholicity."

His outpouring at Pentecost, the visible consecration of true temple of God on earth.

As before His first manifestation "darkness was on the face of the deep," so at second. Is. xxxii. 15.

He is never to be withdrawn, but to be the organ of Christ's spiritual presence.

He is therefore given to the Church in her corporate capacity, and to her individual members.

His presence evidenced by outgrowth of Christian virtues.

Where these are stunted, the fault lies in ourselves.

His office in the Church is a great reality. Luke xi. 13.

## II. WHAT THE TEXT REQUIRES.

(1.) That we should have the Spirit dwelling in every part of our nature.

Every part of human nature needs restitution.

Therefore He dwells in the body. 1 Cor. vi. 9.

In the understanding—the will—the affections.

He makes the conscience—

"Quick as the apple of an eye,  
The slightest touch of sin to feel."

Above all He takes possession of the heart.

*Text* calls on you to be thus "filled with the Spirit."

- (2.) That we should be possessed of the graces of the Spirit in all their manifold variety.

The Christian is the highest and noblest style of man.

Hence the charge of 2 Pet. i. 5—8.

These graces described by St. Paul. Gal. v. 22, 23.

The term "gentleman" a highly expressive word.

The only true "gentleman" one who is "filled with the Spirit."

- (3.) That we should be wholly guided by His influence, and subject to His control.

Two agents employed by God, His Word and His Spirit.

The Word as seed sown in heart, which may lie dormant.

But the Spirit emphatically a quickening agent.

Exhibited His power in Samson, Elijah, &c.

But especially in Christ. Mark i. 12, Luke iv. 14, John iv. 32.

So the Apostle would have us be "filled with the Spirit."

- (4.) That we should be His instruments for fulfilling His mission on earth.

What is the mission of the Spirit? John xv. 26 (ult.)

Christ's work not to languish by reason of His departure.

His Kingdom a spiritual organization established and recognized at His ascension.

This connected with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

His influence to be felt by means of human agency.

Acts i. 8.

Witnesses they could not help being. Jer. xx. 9.

No menaces could deter them, no persecutions daunt.

Acts viii. 4.

So it will be with us, if Spirit of God dwell in us.

Thus prove faithful witnesses of Christ, *text*.

Address those who know not the Spirit.

Consider your awful position. Rom. viii. 9.

Mere vague hopes in God's mercy of no avail.

Therefore we say to you *text*.

## THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

"So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."—Ezek. xxxvii. 10.

A book full of startling pictures and symbols.

Ezekiel's character.\*

Condition of Israel at this time, v. 11.

Needed no ordinary man at such a juncture.

Yet no easy task before the prophet.

He describes the visions of God in glowing language.

Employs strange combinations, and grotesque forms, and weird imagery.

We see this in vision of chap. i.

We see it also here.

Admirably adapted to arouse a desponding people.

It spoke to them of omnipotence of their covenant God.

Speaks also of Israel's future restoration. Comp. vs. 21, 22.

Bears witness to doctrine of resurrection of body.

But now speak of the lesson it furnishes for us.

## I. THE APPARENT HOPELESSNESS OF THE CONDITION OF THESE BONES.

Picture the scene.

Prophet told to inspect them minutely ; his verdict, "they were very dry."

Hopeless to expect revivification.

Same sad spectacle from spiritual point of view.

What is England, what our parish, but a valley of dry bones?

True life of soul extinguished, slaves to sin.

Lost all trace of Divine image, the spectres of what they originally were.

Sin has consumed their spiritual substance, so that reduced to mere skeletons.

Evident, too, that a fearful carnage taking place.

Some have been slain by ignorance and superstition.

Some by intemperance—some by lust—some by worldliness.

The weapons of sin countless in their variety.

\* Fairbairn's Ezekiel, p. 7.



Ay, even here, in this congregation, we see wasted strength,  
and withered fibre, and broken muscle.\*  
Take any unconverted man, and mark signs of death.  
How futile the efforts you make to restore him.  
If asked, "Can these bones live?" you can only say, v. 3.

## II. THE MEANS EMPLOYED FOR THEIR RESUSCITATION.—v. 4.

This charge constantly reiterated in Old and New Testaments.  
That man is fallen, but that God has provided a remedy,  
this we are charged to proclaim.  
How prophet's heart must have failed him in obeying charge.  
How could man's voice convey sense to grinning skulls?  
Only a madman would think of preaching to such a congregation.  
Yet prophet bound to obey command of Him who says  
Is. lv. 8.  
God here teaches Ezekiel and us, that He retains in His  
own hands the conversion of souls.  
He says, I honour you by making you my fellow-labourers,  
but you are only to speak *My* word.  
Yet how hopeless to expect that this can arouse hardened  
sinners.  
Does it not seem "foolishness?"  
Yet, though the bones are very dry, the command is 2 Tim.  
iv. 2.  
Would that Ritualists would remember this.  
Souls not to be won by music, or incense, or processions.  
No divine authority for these things.  
The earnest preacher of a pure Gospel wears mantle of  
ancient prophets, as he cries, v. 4.

## III. THE RESULT ACHIEVED BY THIS MEANS.

A word of comfort and power.  
The word of Him who said, Gen. i. 3.  
The prophet not left long in doubt, hears noise as of rustle  
of angels' wings.  
Sees agitation, bone coming to bone, but "no breath."  
So now in preaching word, torpid consciences aroused, &c.  
If angels, as we believe they do, hover in our sanctuaries,

\* Melville's Sermon on this text.

they notice startled throb, or hear half-formed mental resolve.

Then bone comes to his bone, signs of animation furnished.  
The sinner then clothed with the sinew and flesh of Christianity.

But this not enough, Hos. v. 4.

A mightier agent needed. v. 9.

Ministrations must be authenticated by seal of Holy Spirit.

Therefore we must betake ourselves to prayer.

Many have fair outside show, but no real life.

Who can quicken them but that Divine Spirit?

How vainly we try to cope with vice &c. without His aid.

We need His vivifying agency to bring us nearer to Jesus.

Be earnest in prayer for promised gift of Spirit.

Breathe on us, Lord, in this our day,  
And these dry bones shall live,  
Speak peace into our hearts and say  
"The Holy Ghost receive."

### THE BURNING FIERY FURNACE.

"He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."—Daniel iii. 25.

The Assyrian empire now reached its culmination.

Its monarch regarded himself as a god.

Orders a gigantic image to be set up, which the three Jews refuse to worship, v. 17, 18.

A lesson for Christians, *e.g.*, in observance of Lord's day.

Duty to be attended to regardless of all consequences.

Their answer enrages the king—fiery furnace.

The sight that met his gaze described in *text*.

This narrative teaches us :

#### I. THAT GOD'S PEOPLE ARE HIS PECULIAR CARE.

God is kind even to the unthankful. Matt. v. 45.

How much more so to believers.

His word pledged for Zion's safety. Ps. ii. 1.

As soldiers in beleagured fortress repel the besiegers, so saints of God. Exod. xv. 21.

Their fortress an impregnable one. Ps. xci. 2.

And this is no vain confidence. Ps. xci. 9, 10.

Though clouds gather, &c., the believer remains undaunted.  
Committed his cause to God. Elisha at Dothan.

So three Jews here—received fulfilment of Is. xliii. 2.

So we also may expect the same gracious deliverance.

Do we possess the confidence God's people enjoy?

There is no confidence where enmity exists.

Confidence and peace spring from faith in Christ. Rom.  
viii. 1; Is. xxvi. 3; Job xiii. 15.

No need to drift down tide of unbelief, for Is. xlix. 14—16.

Seek this faith. Micah vii. 19.

Contrast brawling brook and placid river.\*

## II. THAT THE TIME OF TRIAL IS OFTEN THE TIME OF CLOSEST COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

It was so with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

We believe the fourth to have been the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Prov. viii. 31.

The same as Gen. xviii. 22, xix. 21, xxxii. 24; Exod. iii. 4,  
xxiii. 21, and Joshua v. 13.

Ever advancing to rescue, Jesus bare His people's burden.  
Is. lxiii. 9.

So ever deals with His suffering Church.

As of old, Judges x. 16, so promises, Is. lxvi. 13.

No uninterested spectator of their wrongs. Zech. ii. 8.

Threw Himself in the way of Saul, Acts ix. 4.

Opened the eyes of disciples at Emmaus.

Was with Paul in ship of Alexandria.

But objected, these were days of miracles, but we reply—

What supported John Huss at the stake?

What strengthened Luther at Worms?

What soothed the bitter pains of martyrs?

What prompts the missionary to go forth?

What sustained the courage of our fellow-subjects in the  
Indian mutiny?

What but the presence of Jesus?

## III. THAT AFFLICTIONS REALLY PROFIT BELIEVERS INSTEAD OF INJURING THEM.

The fire loosed the bonds of these Jews.

When they came out, they were promoted to the highest  
offices.

\* The Gospel in Ezekiel, by Dr. Guthrie, p. 408.

Calamities and misfortunes happen to all alike.

Need to exercise caution in interpreting them.

On the one hand not as Jews, John ix. 2, Luke xiii. 2.

On the other, not because Heb. xii. 6, therefore a son.

Were this all the proof of our adoption, then Pharaoh enjoyed it.

Need to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit.

For this affliction needed. Cant. iv. 16.

If Jesus needed to be perfected through suffering, *à fortiori* His people.

Poverty, sickness, pain, bereavement, the medicine God employs.

Difference between the sufferings of the wicked and the righteous.

Unpardoned sinner in suffering sees no bow of promise.

But no sting in afflictions of the Christian.

In poverty, misfortune, sickness, death no curse.

Have we not seen fond parent bending over couch of darling child, yet

“Still meekly yielding to the rod,  
Still loving man, still thanking God.”

Have we not seen virtuous assailed by calumny, yet Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6.

Such trials produce no injurious effects on believers.

Only the rude wind which tears aside veil, enabling them to discern Jesus whispering Is. lxvi. 13.

Seek to realize the nearness of His presence.

Ask for spiritual discernment to weigh things in the balances of the sanctuary.

Then the burning fiery furnace will be endurable.

Find His presence allaying its heat, enabling you to say—

“Once it seemed very hard that thou should'st choose  
What I had loved the most,  
To make me say, ‘Thy will be done’  
At such a bitter cost.  
But now I see that it was wisest love  
Claiming its rightful throne;  
That in my consecrated heart  
Thou mightest reign alone.”\*

\* “The Name of Jesus,” by C. M. N.

## THE CHRISTIAN CONFLICT.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."—Eph. vi. 12.

Anarchy and confusion in the world, the result of sin.  
 Scripture points backward to the forfeited bowers of Eden,  
 and forward to the New Jerusalem.  
 Points also to Christ, through whom the prize is to be won.  
 But not to be secured without a struggle.  
 As pilgrims we journey through a hostile country.  
 We have a terrible foe to cope with.  
 Therefore need celestial armour, for *text*.  
 Consider

# I. THE NAME BY WHICH OUR CHRISTIAN CONDITION HERE IS CHARACTERIZED. "A wrestling."

Human existence chequered—"Man born to trouble," &c.  
 Even worldly persons find this to be the case.  
 But the believer is an escaped bondsman pursued by Satan.  
 From hour of new birth, his life one of warfare.  
 A peculiar kind of warfare—"a wrestling."  
 One who grapples with his enemy in a personal struggle.  
 Satan comes to close quarters—insinuates himself into  
 citadel of heart.  
 He has a quarrel with every Christian.  
 "Wise to do evil," he suits temptations to natures of  
 victims.  
 A never-ceasing conflict.  
 As Paul said Acts xx. 23, so the Christian has no immunity.  
 Yes, we are wrestlers, not conquerors as yet.  
 Let us take heart, as we fight the good fight of faith.

# II. THE ASSAILANTS AGAINST WHOM WE HAVE TO CONTEND.

"Flesh and blood" denotes sinful human nature.  
 1 Cor. xv. 50.  
 Here, however, it refers to human beings, Matt. xvi. 17,  
 Gal. i. 16.  
 "Not" here an absolute negative, not "not so much."  
 But this is surely contrary to experience, for we contend  
 with wicked men.

*E.g.* Lot in Sodom, Gal. iv. 29.

But Apostle here views "flesh and blood" as Satan's instruments.

He is the prime mover—James iii. 6 (ult.), Rev. ii. 10.

Paul at this time felt no anger at his gaolers for *text*.

No believer counts his persecutors as enemies on whom he prays for vengeance, Acts iii. 17.

Rather he regards them as objects of pity, Luke xxiii. 34.

No, our foes are more terrible—"principalities," &c.

Our conflict with the hosts of hell.

When hurled from heaven, no daysman found for them.

Enrolled under various dignities as Col. i. 16.

On this subject Scripture speaks only in general terms.

Exercise dominion in this world—Satan styled its "prince."

From these names we learn severity of this "wrestling."

First, "principalities," ruling over inferior spirits.

"Powers," expressive of vast strength and numbers.

Luke viii. 2 and 30.

These "powers" formidable for their unity.

The elements under their control. Eph. ii. 2, Job. i. 19.

The air laden with Satan's whispered suggestions.

"Rulers," &c., producing gross darkness.

Think of heathenism in its palmy days.

Darkness makes men helpless, Exod. x. 23.

In such a state, too, filled with terrors.

"Wicked Spirits," &c., comp. Isaiah xxxi. 3.

Possessed of vast intellectual abilities.

Invisible in their advance to attack.

Immortal, unlike men of whom said, Matt. ii. 20.

Unwearied in their assaults. Job. ii. 2.

"In heavenly places," opposing believer in heavenward journey.

Satan always has his chaplain at hand. Acts xiii. 8.

Matt. xiii. 4, 28.

Yes, we have each our own personal antagonist.

How different the interest in worldly calling from that taken in spiritual service.

Satanic agency plainly at work.

Such the nature of our warfare.

"Who is sufficient for these things?" Numb. xiii. 33.

But Jesus has also His "ministering Spirits."

Satan's doom already proclaimed.

"Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

## GOD'S DOMINION AND POWER.

"And He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand or say unto Him: What doest thou?"—Dan. iv. 35.

Sketch Nebuchadnezzar's history. (*Vide* Smith's Bib. Dic.)

Sir H. Rawlinson's testimony confirms v. 30.

His madness confirmed by Herodotus.

His confession.

This confession may refer to heathen deity Merodach.

But we know it can only rightly refer to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## I. HIS DOMINION IS UNIVERSAL.

Idea of sovereignty is wrapped up in idea of God.

He cannot delegate His dominion to any created being.

Hence argument for Christ's Deity. Heb. i. 8.

Qualities needful in a sovereign, without which his reign would be tyranny.

These possessed in infinite degree by God. Jer. x. 7.

Exercises an absolute dominion.

His dominion unlimited in extent, *text*.

Extends throughout the universe.

Telescope ever revealing new worlds.

All under God's direction who uses them as his instruments, *e.g.* Judges v. 20, Josh. x. 12.

But other armies, angels, of which He is Lord of Hosts.

These Hosts met Jacob, and hovered over Bethlehem.

These subject to God, while we can say of them, Heb. i. 14.

His dominion exercised over earth.

God's hand seen in meanest as well as mightiest of works.

Proves a guardian of apparently most neglected creatures.

It might seem as if the heathen left to themselves.

Has he not proved a partial monarch, choosing out one nation?

The answer, Rom. ix. 20 and *text*.

A wiser view of God's government, which Nebuchadnezzar learned.

Man endowed with reason, placed on trial, to be won by appeals to reason, conscience, &c.

The Jews not selected at expense of rest, but to be a pattern people.

Heathen not totally cast off—salvation not exclusively confined within pale of Judaism—prophecy deals with heathen.

Of Jews Christ came, in whom all families blessed.

God now dealing mercifully with heathen in placing Jews into captivity in Babylon.

Now that Christ has broken down barrier, His will clearly seen. 1 Tim. ii. 4.

Our duty to carry out that will.

Exalt Him on throne of heart, plead for outpouring of Holy Spirit.

## II. HIS POWER IS IRRESISTIBLE.

His power makes His dominion a reality.

A king may have lawful title to his throne, yet may have no power to enforce his authority.

Not so God. "Puts hook in nose," &c.

As well waves try to move granite rock, as man to cope with Omnipotence.

All history a proof of this, seen in this chapter.

Evidences of His power seen everywhere.

In creation.

In the government of the world.

Pre-eminently in redemption.

Seen too in success of preaching "Christ crucified."

That doctrine opposed to reason, &c.

Yet has it not sped on its way, overturning Paganism, &c.

Annals of world can furnish nothing to compare with progress of Christianity.

How needful for us to humble ourselves.

Our God, no dumb idol, but one whose power produces trust, therefore Is. xxvi. 4.

Additional encouragement for trust, in Rom. viii. 32.

As review our own weakness, look out at His power.

Do you want triumphant grace? 2 Cor. ix. 8.

Do you want comfort under godly sorrow? Is. lvii. 15.

Are you labouring under distresses? Job. v. 8, 9.

What is it you are short of? Eph. iii. 20.



## THE BELIEVER'S CONFIDENCE.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."—Phil. i. 6.

The Church at Philippi peculiarly dear to Paul.  
 The first city in Europe in which he preached the Gospel.  
 Here he enjoyed the hospitality of Lydia.  
 Here God sealed his ministry with a notable miracle.  
 Here enjoyed affections and love of his converts.  
 A bright spot in his memory while a prisoner in Rome.  
 Now reminded of their love by Epaphroditus.  
 Writes to them freely and fully. *Text.*

## I. THE APOSTLE'S CONFIDENCE.

Common opinion that there can be no certainty of salvation till after death.

Formal Christianity contented with a vague trust in God's mercy.

Men say "I hope I shall be saved," without troubling themselves to produce title deeds of inheritance.

But God's people use different language. 2 Tim. i. 12.  
 1 John v. 20.

Such persons risen above platform of conjecture.

Believer of all men most miserable if left in doubt.

Enjoys witness of Spirit.

This expressed by apostle, with reference to Philippians.

Believer is enabled to discern security of his position.

Everything connected with work of grace in his soul confirms his confidence.

He has heard and obeyed the Divine call.

Seed of eternal life germinates in his heart.

Though alive to his own weakness, reckons on the strength of omnipotence.

Yes, confidence is the believer's birthright.

It is a concomitant of the covenant of grace.

It rests upon the promises of God.

It is a result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Thus prove more than conquerors.

## II. THE MATTER OF HIS CONFIDENCE.—Threefold.

(1). Evidence that work of grace begun in their souls.

Some refer this to planting of a Christian Church in Philippi.

But no, it refers to work of grace in individual souls.

It was emphatically "a good work."

Apostle regards them as patients recovering from deadly disease.

Recovery might be slow, liable to relapses, but still sure.

They had learned to set Jesus before them.

Their imitation of Him, though only a rude sketch, gave promise of being a marvellous picture.\*

Christ unrivalled, yet followed by a willing people.

The reality of their spiritual life evidenced by walk.

What evidence are you furnishing of reality of this work?

**(2.) That work due to operation of God Himself.**

Terms Scripture employs to describe work imply Divine hand.

"Illumination," "regeneration," "resurrection," "creation."

Obstacles to grace insurmountable except to Divine power.

All faculties of natural man arrayed against the Gospel.

Evil principles developed into inveterate habits.

Temptations of world bear the unconverted helplessly down its current.

How resist, but by Divine power?

When we see hearts changed, &c., say "See what God hath wrought."

**(3.) That work would be carried to triumphant perfection.**

God "the finisher of faith" does not do work by halves.

Work not only begun, but continually carried on by Him.

If not, believer has no ground for confidence.

"Hold thou me up and I shall be safe" always his cry.

Christ ever in the soul, the secret of the saint's perseverance.

His path, "the path of the just, which shineth more and more, &c."

That day is the glorious day of Christ's appearing.

The Apostle's gaze always rivetted on this.

"The day of the manifestation of the Sons of God."

This pointed at here, though work completed in a sense at death.

Then lay aside their Christian armour—enter rest.

But beyond this, Christian hope looks for Redeemer's second advent.

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption, Sect. 97.

Do you know anything of this work?

Source of assurance and comfort, in the uncertainties of this life.

Ask God to reveal Jesus Christ to your heart.

### THE THREE RECKONINGS.

"And when He had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. Matt. xviii. 24.

Difficult to forgive an injury.

Some wrongs rankle deeply, so that this question a natural one, v. 21.

Peter congratulated himself on large-hearted tolerance.

Rabbies limited forgiveness to three sins, basing practice on Amos i. 3.

Almighty's mode of dealing no example for sinners.

Spiritual acts rendered worthless by being reckoned up.

Therefore Christ says v. 22.

Illustrates it by a parable.

A mine of suggestive thought here.

Confine attention to three reckonings.

### I. THE KING RECKONING.

Sad state of things at beginning of reckoning.

The servant owes £1,875,000.

Represents enormous extent of man's guilt.

The servant's despairing cry, that of a man beside himself.

The King knows this, and cancels debt.

Sets forth mind of God towards sinners.

Of our sins we may say as Ps. xl. 5. (ult.)

Yet assurances of forgiveness. Is. i. 18, Is. xlv. 22.

But sinner needs to perceive his true condition.

Must feel that he has the sentence of death in himself.

Satan is ever exerting a blinding influence.

To awaken sinner, God proceeds to reckon with him.

With some He reckons by the revelation of His grace.

With some by the thunders of the law.

With some by the dealings of His providence.

Reckoned with David by Nathan, with Ninevites by Jonah, etc.

How often has He reckoned with you?

Surely we are familiar with episodes of this kind.  
Then see worthlessness of our good deeds, and disposed to say—

“ Here is a bottle almost full of tears,  
Bundles of heartless prayers and faithless fears,  
Talents grown rusty with long lying by ;  
A half-strung harp whose music is a sigh ;  
Necklaces strung with vows that once were fair,  
But broken now or spent in empty air ;  
Thoughts, feelings, passions, all with evil rife,  
Neglected duties and a wasted life.”

- How terrible the result of such a reckoning.
- We want to see ourselves that we may cry “ God be merciful to me.”
- He only needs this, to dry up tears and bestow forgiveness.

## II. THE SERVANT RECKONING. v. 28.

He reckons from his own selfish point of view.

His debtor only owes £3 2s. 6d.

Yet drags him to prison.

At a loss to understand how he could act so basely.

Instance of baseness almost beyond conception.

Yet only too common among Christians.

But a violation of the principle laid down in Luke vii. 47.

Ask how could he have received forgiveness, yet show no love?

He had never realized greatness of his debt, nor generosity of his Lord.

Regards it as a commonplace matter, illustrating that generosity for which His Lord loved to be credited.

Regards it as Simon did, who owed only fifty pence.

This explains harshness and intolerance of Christians towards each other.

They reckon on a false basis, leaving out element of their own forgiveness.

Of too frequent occurrence.

Men hear of love of God, yet deal with others on principle of “ eye for eye.”

They maintain a churlish unsocial spirit.

They refuse to aid cause of Christ, or satisfy claims of a needy creditor.

Does it not prove that they are really not forgiven ?

Evinces a cruel disposition like David. 1 Sam. xii. 31.  
Think of these things—ask am I not forgiven?

### III. THE FINAL RECKONING. vs. 32—35.

Solemn words pointing to stern realities.  
Christ constantly alludes to final judgment.  
He desired that we should keep it before us.  
The reasonableness of such an event, and the necessity  
for it  
The reckoning conducted on principles of strict and im-  
partial equity.  
It will be based on the conduct of men here. James ii.  
12, 13.  
Think of it—no recommending to mercy there.  
If not showing mercy now, shall receive none then.  
Matt. v. 7.  
Think of it—for the *lex talionis* will again be in force.  
Do you believe in a future judgment?  
It must exert a wholesome influence in your daily life.  
Keep before us the greatness of God's love.  
It will impel us to show love, so that at last hear Matt.  
xxv. 40.

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### CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP.

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the  
Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."—Phil. iii. 20.

Season of advent commemorates three facts.\*  
Existence of the Christian Church, an evidence that Christ  
has come.  
Difference between godly and ungodly, a proof of the  
second.  
Conscience bears witness to the third.  
Yet second advent lost sight of by mankind.  
Too many like those described, vs. 18, 19.  
To them His advent a day of terror.  
In striking contrast we have here;

\* Robertson's First Advent Lecture. The Grecian, vol. 1.

**I. THE BELIEVER'S PRESENT CONDITION.**

Believer acts as a pilgrim.

“Πολιτευμα” three meanings.

“Our country is in heaven.”

Dissatisfaction with this world, proves regard for another.

So Patriarchs. Heb. xi. 14.

Kingdom of God has to do battle here, for its very existence.

Atmosphere of this world uncongenial for growth of heavenly seed.

Believer unable to attain “measure of stature of fulness of Christ.”

He is forced to confess “spirit willing, but flesh weak.”

Consciousness of sin makes him long for complete redemption.

Yes, he has a glorious land for an everlasting possession.

There a King reigns in righteousness.

There His High Priest pleads for struggling church.

There are enshrined his most precious treasures.

There his heart's best affections are necessarily set.

“Our citizenship is in heaven.”

Honour to receive the freedom of a city.

Privileges of a Roman citizen. Comp. Acts xxii. 25—28.

But Paul had something better to boast of. *Text.*

Interests of citizen bound up with city.

Into that eternal city nothing unclean can enter.

We must prepare to take our stand among its citizens.

Christ must now reign in our hearts.

Prove citizenship by “making friends of Mammon of unrighteousness.”

Here see “truth for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne.”

But what have we to do with this? *Text.*

There mercy rejoices over judgment.

There the condemned have sentence reversed.

There no “flowers doomed to blush unseen.”

What though all this future, yet faith. Heb. xi. 1.

“Our conversation in heaven.”

Is it so indeed? Do we speak language of Canaan?

These tests to try ourselves.

Every man is as the objects with which He converses.

**II. THE BELIEVER'S FUTURE HOPE. Text.**

The great theme of Christian expectation.

(1.) **An assured hope, therefore waits for it patiently.**

Bridegroom taken from us, but one promise fulfilled,  
John xiv. 18, and the other sure, John xiv. 3.

Though centuries elapsed since promise, yet sure, Acts i. 11.

*When* He will come, not told, but are charged to watch.

Not concerned when scoffers sneer at non-fulfilment of  
promise to past generations of Christians. Heb. xi. 13.

We believe with Enoch, Jude 14, and cannot act as  
Matt. xxiv. 48.

We know why He delays—as High Priest pleads till  
number of His elect is accomplished.

Therefore though tempted to cry, “How long,” yet can  
say “Thy will be done.”

(2.) **A blissful hope, therefore expects it eagerly.**

Bride joyful at prospect of being united to her bridegroom.

While devils cry, “Art thou come to torment us before the  
time,” believers entreat Him to hasten coming.

For several reasons it is a blissful hope.

(1.) On account of the excellence of His person.

Already seen Him through lattice of ordinances.

Long for something more than to behold Him “as in a  
glass darkly.”

Christ sends messengers, as Abraham sent Eliezer to tell of  
excellence of his master’s son.

Report filled them with eagerness. 1 Pet. i. 8.

Cry amen when “Spirit and Bride say come.”

(2.) On account of the blessings He brings with Him.  
These are twofold.

(a.) Deliverance from enemies.

Luke xxi. 28. A day of complete emancipation from all  
evils.

Here tears mingled with our songs.

Now in wilderness state, exposed to attacks from within  
and from without.

*Within* from lusts, therefore rejoice that Mal. iii. 2.

Here as convalescents recovering from fever.

Here cry Rom. vii. 24, but then old Adam destroyed.

*Without*, surrounded by vice, as Lot in Sodom.

Then no Ishmael left, Antichrist destroyed.

(b.) Brings reward with Him.

Then saint's coronation day. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Do you dread that day? It *will* come nevertheless.

Do you pretend to desire it? Amos v. 18.

Are you preparing for it?

#### THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BELIEVER'S BODY.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.—Phil. iii. 21.

"Here we have no continuing city."

This truth lost sight of, yet receiving continual confirmation.

Few family circles which have not lost some member.

Need to pray Ps. xxxix. 4.

Paul felt his course was now nearly run.

His first easy imprisonment of two years over.

Now in barracks of Prætorian guard—threatened with death.

His thoughts revert to Philippians, ch. iv. 18.

A strong bond of affection subsisting between him and them.

Warns against false professors, ch. iii. 18, 19.

Charges them to follow "us for an example."

Don't say our example not an encouraging one, for vs. 20, 21.

#### I. THE FACT STATED.—"He shall change our vile body."

Give more correct translation.

Ours "a body of humiliation." "Dust thou art, &c."

What it was previous to the fall idle to conjecture.

Afterwards eternal life could only be eternal misery.

Contrast Gen. ii. 25 with our present condition.

It has been well said:

"The painful feelings produced by ridicule, are often more poignant than those arising from the consciousness of having rendered ourselves the objects of resentment or hatred."\*

Shame mantles cheek of child, &c.

Excited by the simplest and most trifling causes.

Haunts us perpetually from cradle to grave.

Awakened by perception of decay of our bodily vigour.

\* Stewart's Outlines of Philosophy.



Felt by patient, as he lies helpless on sick bed.  
Shame our portion now, and hereafter, Dan. xii. 2.  
Legible as brand of Cain, it proclaims ours to be a body of humiliation.

But mark, the *text* says "He shall transform, &c."  
This true only of believers.  
Paul also speaking from view he always takes of Christ's Second Advent.  
Observe "*our* vile body" just as, 1 Cor. xv. 51.  
How glorious must the future have appeared to one animated by this conviction.  
He must have risen above present trials to exult in future glorious destiny.  
Only a believer enjoy such a blissful hope.  
Strive to make it yours.

But *text* true also, of all whose flesh now rests in hope.  
We enter not on metaphysical proofs of doctrine of resurrection.  
Sufficient for us that Jesus has said, John v. 29.  
This doctrine appeared ridiculous to heathen. Acts xvii. 32.  
But we are sure that our bodies will rise again.  
Jesus will show His people the path of life.  
He needs no "storied urn nor animated bust" to mark the spot where "He giveth His beloved sleep."  
It matters not where our bones lie.  
Refer to Moses' hidden grave in Bethpeor.  
He and all shall one day realize truth of *text*.

## II. THE PATTERN AFTER WHICH IT WILL BE EFFECTED.

Jesus rose, as model or pattern of His people's resurrection.  
True His flesh "saw no corruption."  
This will be the case with those who will be alive at His advent.  
Did Christ rise with *the same* body? No. *Text*.  
For Jesus had a body of humiliation.  
But rose with "a glorious body." Rom. vi. 9.  
We gather from His actions after His resurrection what Paul meant by "a spiritual body."  
Animated by a nobler principle of life than mere "flesh and blood."  
So with us. We believe in the resurrection of the body, "not of the same body."

1 Cor. xv. 37, 38. The acorn not the same as the oak.  
 The believer will rise a transformed being.  
 Then no veil to cloud vision, but stand in centre of panorama  
 of truth.  
 Highest flight of speculation falls short of *text*.

### III. THE POWER BY WHICH IT WILL BE EFFECTED.

It is written, 1 Cor. xv. 25.  
 An unceasing silent putting forth of power in providence.  
 Faith confident that all tends to fulfilment of His purposes.  
 We are less impressed by this steady putting forth of power  
 than by sudden outbursts of it.  
 Indifferent to power in operations of nature, but awed at  
 upheaving of earthquake.  
 So in kingdom of grace, take little heed of extension of  
 Church.  
 But impressed by such events as the Reformation, &c..  
 Most striking exhibition of Divine power, Eph. i. 20.  
 Viewing that, must confess only His forbearance prevents  
 Him at once subduing all things to Himself.  
 Death no longer the king of terrors.  
 A subject full of comfort and encouragement.  
 Christ's omnipotence pledged for His people.  
 In Christ we are safe.

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### A TWOFOLD PROMISE.

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God;  
 for he hath given you the former rain moderately (*margin*, a teacher of  
 righteousness according to righteousness); and he will cause to come down  
 for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month."—  
 Joel ii. 23.

Nothing known of Joel except name of his father.  
 Describes two terrible calamities, a drought and a plague  
 of locusts.  
 His language in describing the plague true to nature.\*  
 Well may prophet summon to weeping, &c.  
 But in judgment God remembers mercy.  
 The land is Israel's, therefore says v. 21.  
 Promises renewal of kindly influences of nature. *Text*.  
 Adopt marginal reading.

\* *Vide* Thompson's Land and Book, p. 417.

**I. A PROMISE OF A TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

An invaluable promise.

Man always learning from cradle to grave.

Seeks to be as "God knowing good and evil."

To such, the offer of a teacher must be grateful.

Many teachers have offered themselves, and secured disciples.

But "blind leaders of blind," false prophets.

Established a reputation by suiting instructions to depravity of human heart.

The result an estrangement from God, illust. in heathen world.

Ceased to regard sin as sinful.

Yet we know some of the heathen groped after truth.

How gladly would such men hail promise of *text*.

The privilege of Israel.

Enjoyment of life connected with knowledge of God. Ezek. xx. 11.

Life bound up with righteousness.

Natural to suppose they would have obeyed teacher.

But no. Judgments needed to make them submit.

This why plague of locusts sent.

Only after being exercised by discipline would they heed their prophets. Is. xxx. 20, 21. (For "though," read "when," and for "yet," read "then.")

But such a condition not pleasant.

Yet if it disposes you to hear, to yearn for forgiveness, &c., it will be commencement of a new existence.

Then you will not only be disposed to hear, but teaching will be provided for you.

Famine a terrible calamity.

Yet for immortal beings there is a worse evil. Amos viii. 11, 12.

Such condition of Church of England before Wesley and Whitefield.

Those who desired pure Gospel teaching had to seek it far and wide.

This dearth not only a cause, but a consequence of indifference of laity to spiritual truth.

Law of demand and supply prevails in spiritual things.

If you are provided with a teacher, give heed to his instructions.

His words may be painful, yet regard them as message from God.

Promise refers eminently to Lord Jesus Christ.  
 The great Teacher, prophets only His heralds.  
 He unfolded spirituality and depth of the law—revealed  
 mysteries—brought life and immortality to light.  
 Well for Jews had they listened to His voice.  
 So we find Him not only a Teacher, but “the Lord our  
 Righteousness.”

## II. A PROMISE OF TEMPORAL BLESSINGS.

Fertility of Palestine depended on rainy season.  
 But fall of rain depended on obedience to laws of Divine  
 Ruler.  
 Deut. xi. 13, 14, contrast xxviii. 23, and compare 1 Kings,  
 xvii. 1.  
 A lesson for us.  
 Taking a mere secular view, national prosperity depends on  
 sound principles taught.  
*E.g.* Strikes would be prevented, if the relation of capital  
 and labour understood.  
 Fenianism an impossibility, if true source of Ireland's pros-  
 perity perceived.  
 Generally, crime a result of the demoralization of society.  
 All proceed from ignorance of righteous principles.  
 Natural blessings come from God.  
 If you would enjoy them, seek His favour.  
 Then you can obey the prophet's call to rejoice. *Text.*  
 Cause for joy to be brought “out of darkness.”  
 Possible for ministers to be “dumb dogs which cannot  
 bark.”  
 But not so with your minister, therefore obey.  
 Bring selves to be tested by glass of Divine Word.  
 Then personal acquaintance with God, and then “never  
 ashamed.” v. 26.

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## THE POWER OF FAITH.

“And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole ; go  
 in peace, and be whole of thy plague.” Mark v. 34.

Jesus had healed demoniac at Gadara.  
 Complies with request of Gadarenes to depart.  
 So some smarting under convictions of sin, banish uncom-  
 fortable reflections.

Jesus waits for no second repulse.

If in general does not reveal Himself to careless seekers (Cant. iii. 1), still less does He to those who use the devil's dialect. v. 7.

Turns to more inviting fields of labour. Comp. Isaiah xlix. 5.

Beware lest He should say to us Exod. x. 29.

Different reception on the other side.

Entreaty of Jairus.

While Jesus was complying, this woman presses to His side.  
Here several important lessons ;

## I. MAN'S HELPLESSNESS.

For twelve years sought human help in vain, v. 26.

Not only painful but also disgusting remedies applied.

Yet she submitted in hope. Job ii. 4.

But her heart died as she heard them say "we can do nothing more for you."

Besides this, it was a disease which made her "unclean."

It was also a wasting disease.

Thus typifies destructive effects of sin in the soul.

Ask unregenerate why he does not resist sin.

His answer would be, I cannot.

Have you never experienced this feeling of thralldom ?

Go to your friends and ask their advice how to get rid of it.

You take it, yet find no relief. Ecc. i. 8, Job. vi. 4.

You "suffer many things" as conscience condemns you.

Then you go to a minister of Christ.

But if you say, he is a good man, I will ask him to pray for me, &c., James v. 16.

To such language we would reply, 2 Kings v. 7.

Trust no child of man—go to Jesus—touch the hem of His garment.

## II. THE POWER OF FAITH.

Her hope revived as she heard of Christ's fame, v. 28.

Yet her faith clouded by superstition. Comp. Luke viii. 44.

Numb. xv. 37—40. Rabbinical traditions respecting it.

This woman's faith not extinguished by her superstition.

Virtue flows forth for her healing.

Teaches us to look more charitably on the ignorant, &c.

God had a people in darkness of middle ages, and among devotees of Romish Church.

Not give them over to perdition, but point them to Christ. Dare not narrow the foundation laid. John iii. 16.

We want faith to lay hold of Christ.

Want to realize our disease that we may go to Him as Physician.

Experience of past encourages us to go to Him.

It is our duty to be bold in our approach to Him. Comp. 2 Kings xiii. 19.

Longs to bless us but must be asked. Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

Lord, increase our faith.

### III. CHRIST'S WELCOME TO THE SINNER.

"Who touched me?"—Yet He was not ignorant.

He asked in mercy for her sake.

Instances of questions asked thus. Acts v. 8, 2 Kings v. 25, Gen. iii. 9, iv. 9.

But in these cases, asked to awaken a guilty conscience.

But Christ asked to put gladness in her heart.

Desired to put honour on her faith.

She was in danger of losing His benediction "Go in peace."

It was the crisis of her spiritual life.

The timid, retiring woman must confess Jesus before the crowd, as the birth-pang of her new life.

Notice distinction unwittingly drawn by disciples, v. 31.

So ever; here in congregation many throng, how few touch!

Is yours the thronging of external profession, or the touch of earnest faith?

Take care you come to seek Jesus, then "Go in peace."

Address poor burdened sinner.

Jesus still the same.

### THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."—Col. i. 12.

St. Paul appears never to have been at Colosse. Comp. ii. 1 with i. 4.

Planted by Epaphras, assisted by Philemon.

But at Ephesus Paul near enough to be well informed about Church there.

Now in Rome, when writing to Ephesians and Philemon,  
natural to address Colossians.

Hence resemblance between this Epistle and that to the  
Ephesians.

Passage part of prayer for Colossians.

## I. THE CHARACTER OF THE INHERITANCE.

The inheritance no novel piece of information.

Death forces man to turn thoughts to future world.

Speculate on nature of inheritance there.

Hence guesses of ancient heathen poets.

But Jews better informed, Abraham called to receive in-  
heritance.

Canaan was Israel's inheritance.

Each Israelite his lot, transmitted from father to son.

All this typical of better inheritance.

As Canaan a spot dear to God, so world at large will one  
day be renovated so as to be inheritance.\*

### (1). Its character judged from inhabitants.—“Saints.”

In earthly Canaan none inherit but descendants of patriarchs.

“To Abraham and seed promises made,” hence care of Jews  
to keep genealogical records inviolate.

But must also exhibit spirit of Abraham.

*A fortiori* with heavenly inheritance. Rev. xxi. 27

To cling to sin is virtually to exclude from inheritance.

You may like Simon Magus be baptized, but have “neither  
part nor lot.”

Only one passport, “without holiness, no man see Lord.”

Do the devil's work and vain to expect portals of heaven  
opened. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

### (2). Another note furnished.—“In light.”

Light suggestive of joy—of elevation of character—of God  
who is light.

Believers children of light, and changed. Matt. v. 10.

They have the light of knowledge.

In that light love to bask, contrast to wicked. John iii. 19.

They have the light of grace.

Is this light to suffer an eclipse? Nay, Prov. iv. 18.

Yes, for when inheritance reached, one of light.

\* Fairbairn's Typology, vol. I., “The Destined Inheritance.”

They have the light of glory.

A light beyond brightness of sun, Rev. xxi. 23.

Vain to give definiteness to ideas suggested by these words.

## II. THE "MEETNESS" NECESSARY TO QUALIFY US FOR ITS ENJOYMENT.

Must admit world shows want of appreciation of divine things.

Look around you. Look into your own heart.

A special sense needed, for 1 Cor. ii. 14.

When thus, like man in Pilgrim's Progress who raked in mire, unconscious of angel holding crown.

We must have an appetite excited, must be made "meet."

What is this meetness?

That produced by the Holy Spirit.

It is, in other words, conversion. John iii. 3; Matt. v. 8.

Its reality evidenced in daily walk.

Put it to yourselves, have you experienced this?

Remain as you are, and you cannot go to heaven.

"But who shall stand within the holy place?

Who meet the gaze, the searchings of that eye?

Who shall approach the Father face to face?

Who enter, where all taint of sin must fly?

None but the man whose heart is pure and clean,

Upon whose brow God's holiness is seen."

Yes, God must put forth creative power, and fashion us anew.

He has promised to do this.

You must plead for fulfilment of promise.

Nothing short of this change fit you for inheritance.

Education, refinement, discipline will fail; "new wine in old bottles;" a new heart needed.

Then you will have cause to thank God.

"Giving thanks," yea, meet and right it is to do so.

Gratitude will impel you to keep yourself pure.

Act thus, and you will enjoy witness of Spirit here, and hereafter share felicity when

"The morning shall awaken,  
The shadows pass away,  
And each true-hearted servant  
Shall shine as doth the day."

24



## SUBMISSION TO CHASTISEMENT.

"I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him, until He plead my cause and execute judgment for me; He will bring me forth to the light and I shall behold His righteousness."—Micah vii. 9.

Though God is reconciled to the sinner, He cannot be to sin.

Those who think lightly of sin, not believers.

Believer uses cry of publican, "God be merciful," &c.

It is in mercy to sinner, God is not merciful to sin.

God's abhorrence of sin strengthens saint.

Complaint of captive, but penitent Jerusalem.

Knows well why she is a captive.

Now in sorrow, through God's mercy.

Peace once more revisits her, and submission. *Text.*

It is ever so in God's dealings with His people.

His language is Ps. lxxxix. 32.

In contrast with Holy Spirit, Satan first a tempter then a troubler.

But no matter, mercy in store.

# I. THE BELIEVER'S SUBMISSION TO CHASTISEMENT. "I will bear," &c.

He knows misfortunes do not come by chance.

Penalties on sinners for law broken.

Lam. iii. 39. A pertinent question. Prov. xix. 3.

Liable to sin though delivered from its power.

Inclination to sin offensive to God, and punished when yielded to.

Hence chastisement of saints. Amos iii. 2.

Believer therefore says *text*.

Distinguish between inflictions of judicial wrath and corrections of parental love.

A God of love, Lam. iii. 33.

"Comes out of His place" to do "His strange work."

Denunciatory prophecies styled "the burden of the Lord."

But He strikes at last "with iron hands."

Not thus with His people, but as father correcting child.

Yet similitude of earthly father fails.

Punishes from irritation, caprice, mistake, but Heb. xii. 10.

This makes believer resigned. Job. i. 21. 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

Discern source whence crosses spring, and then say *text*.



But woe to world.  
 When His purposes fulfilled, casts axe into the fire.  
 On which side are you ?  
 No halting between two opinions.

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## THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"And this is the name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer. xxiii. 6.

To-day Church closes Ecclesiastical year.  
 To-day girds herself for fresh start.  
 Epistle and Gospel suited to position.  
 Gospel looks back, "gather up fragments."  
 Epistle looks forward to "times of restitution."  
 But also carries back to "times of ignorance."  
 Aim of Church to prepare for renewed observance of  
 Christian seasons.

House of David fallen, Ch. xxii. 19 and 30.  
 But God faithful, prophet announces, Ch. xxiii. 5, 6.  
 These words refer to Christ, and shew—

## I. WHAT HE IS IN HIMSELF.

Scripture testifies to Deity of Christ.  
 Essential to mediatorial office, here in *text*. (Margin.)  
 This title sets forth real nature—Jehovah.  
 Same as Immanuel, Matt. 1, 23.  
 Set forth as embodiment of "righteousness."  
 Till thus embodied an abstract idea.  
 Attribute peculiar to God. Dan. ix. 7.  
 It is the perfection of God's nature.  
 Prominent in Old Testament.  
 An axiom, 1 John iii. 7, yet the best conscious of defect.  
 To be "righteous" is to be Divine.  
 Show this from Matt. xix. 17.  
 So we, if we would enjoy saving view of Christ *as God*.  
 If His righteousness available for us, must be righteous  
 Himself.  
 Modern infidelity strives to rob Him of righteousness.\*

\* Newman's Phases of Faith, chap. vii.

But challenge unanswered John viii. 46.

View Him as God, and no doubt as to ability to save,  
recognize as link, able to give salvation, for *text*.

## II. WHAT HE IS IN RELATION TO US.

Impelled to seek after communion with God.

But convicted of disobedience—sense of guilt.

Our inquiry therefore, how set right with Maker.

Imputation of Adam's guilt protested against as "unjust."

But if admit protest, what avail? Nature infected with sin.

Sin brought home by moral law.

Therefore "the ministration of death."

But Christ remedied mischief by "magnifying law."

Complied with its demands; "it is finished."

Established law as condition of existence to which man  
may again aspire.

But still more by His death.

No further demand, perfect righteousness wrought out.

Sinner looks out of himself, and sees Christ, 1 Cor. i. 30.

But how appropriated by believer?

By faith. Rom. iii. 21, 22.

Faith realises historic truth of Calvary, but more, personal  
interest in atonement.

Justified by realizing all that death and resurrection of  
Christ set forth.

Believer's righteousness therefore emanates from God.

Yet relation of Christ to believer misrepresented.

(1.) Christ's righteousness supplements imperfect efforts.

This essence of self righteousness; "fallen from grace."

(2.) Substitute Christ's righteousness for our unrighteous-  
ness.

This Antinomianism.

Believer must be Christ's throughout, else not *text*.

Second error from false view of "imputation."

"To impute" may imply fictitious justification.

But faith not a fictitious imputation, but a real reception  
of Christ.

When thus receives Christ, justified.

Righteousness not a legal fiction, but genuine principle.\*

Christ becomes property of His believing people.

Faith clothes us with Christ, one with Him.

\* Monsell's Religion of Redemption, p. 245.

In short justification and sanctification simultaneous acts.  
 Faith reconciles to God only by uniting to Christ.  
 Thus Christ takes legitimate place on throne of believer's heart.

What is the nature of your faith ?  
 Must carry Christ about enthroned in heart.  
 Then able to say "in the Lord Jehovah have I righteousness and strength."

### THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."—Ecc. xii. 14.

The lessons of the new Lectionary an improvement on the old.

To-day we bring ecclesiastical year to a close.

The three lessons from the Old Testament well suited.

Book of Ecclesiastes one of the three attributed to Solomon.

Canticles the production of his youth.

Proverbs of his manhood.

Ecclesiastes of his old age.

A book which presents many difficulties.

Jewish Scribes hesitated to insert it in Canon, but decided by its conclusion.

Solomon learnt lesson God meant to teach him.

That lesson is v. 13. Enforced by *text*.

### I. THE REASONABLENESS OF A JUDGMENT TO COME.

Its idea interwoven in human consciousness.

Sense of responsibility impressed on all.

In vain infidel object to it, as being fostered by Christianity,  
 for we ask how is it the heathen believe it ?

Forms part of every system of heathen mythology.

Athenians did not mock at this, as at the resurrection.

The tribunal of conscience erected in every man.

No escaping the grasp of this stern officer.

Men may sear conscience, till judgment lost sight of, but  
 yet the thought of it will recur.

Sinner may meet death with a smile, as patient submits to  
 knife without a moan.

Consciousness bears witness to future judgment.

This view confirmed by reflection.

Justice and goodness openly violated here.

A day must come when wrongs redressed. Chap. iii. 16, 17.

What other conclusion could a thoughtful mind arrive at?

## II. ITS CERTAINTY.

This presentiment must have a corresponding reality.

A judgment to come constantly enforced by Scripture.

Jude 14, 15. Job xix. 25. Dan. vii. 9, 10.

In New Testament, 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

Christ describes its solemnities with great minuteness.

Rev. xx. 11—13.

No obscurity hanging over this doctrine.

## III. THE NATURE OF IT.

Dismiss other considerations, and confine to *text*.

### (1.) Judgment passed on actions.

Decisions of judge guided by actions of those tried.

Christ points this out clearly.

Real merits or defects of actions will then be clear.

Here difficult to form a correct estimate.

Arises from imperfection, from limited acquaintance with facts, and from personal bias.

Human judgment unreliable, its verdicts unjust.

But not so then. A test applied, 1 Cor. iii. 16.

All this applies also to *words*.

Important to consider well words and actions.

We are charged to maintain good works.

Say not you are justified by faith while living in sin.

Good works cannot secure heaven, but they are evidences of your meetness for it.

They will vindicate righteousness of the decisions of the Judge.

### (2.) Judgment passed on thoughts.

*Text* shows searching character of the investigation.

There are crimes which never see the light.

There are those who plume themselves on their integrity, who, if real characters were known, would be scouted by society.

Then the mask will be stripped from them.  
 To this Solomon seems to point, but yet true of thoughts.  
 These lie beyond range of human judgment, but then laid  
 bare.

Then plausible professors turned inside out.  
 May we not be dismayed, conscious as we are of sinful  
 thoughts.

Intruders which defile our purity, and remind us of Christ's  
 words, Matt. x. 36.

These prove the corruption of the heart.  
 Need to take heart to God, and ask for its renewal.  
 Thus and thus alone find acceptance in the great day.

Make this, then, the one object of pursuit.  
 Fellow-sinner, I plead with you.  
 Kiss the Son, and then need fear nothing.

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#### MY MESSENGER.

"Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me : and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in : behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts."—Mal. iii. 1.

Malachi contemporary with Nehemiah.  
 They both laboured for the reformation of their countrymen.  
 The prophet's exhortations powerfully seconded the  
 Governor's efforts.  
 So Isaiah encouraged Hezekiah; Jeremiah, Josiah; and  
 Zechariah, Zerrubabel.

The name Malachi supposed to be an ideal one.  
 Septuagint regards the name as an official designation.  
 It is the same word as "my messenger" in *text*.  
 The name assumed to draw attention more forcibly to  
 subject matter of his prophecy.

May have been given at His birth, as Jeremiah i. 10.  
 Sets forth responsibility of bearers of message, as Hagg. i. 13.

The character of His prophecy threatening, not com-  
 forting. Ch. i. 1.  
 Before captivity, ungodliness displayed itself either in open  
 idolatry, or dead formality.

The former effectually cured by the captivity.  
 The latter prominent in Malachi's day.

Accused God of unfaithfulness,—“where is the God of judgment.”

The *text* the answer to this accusation.

## I. THE MESSENGER.

As eastern monarch sends his herald before him, so Messiah.  
He did not select an angel.

The Baptist was a worthy representative of the Majesty of Heaven.

He was no wavering character. Matt. xi. 7.

One intent on fulfilling his commission.

Cared not to render his message palatable to his hearers.

Lived in the desert, but not as a recluse.

Not a courtier, Comp. Esther iv. 2, Amos vii. 12, 13.

Yet his voice made itself heard by king, as well as people.

To all alike, a stern uncompromising witness of the truth.

Yet the Baptist not the only one who fulfilled Malachi's description.

Malachi himself was one who prepared the way of the Lord.

In the Baptist the idea of “My Messenger” most perfectly realized.

Every faithful minister is a messenger.

We need your prayers to prove ourselves faithful.

You need to receive the message with meekness.

Faithful dealing invariably produces pain.

Our duty to preach as “a dying man to dying men.”

Trifle not with the message which says “the Lord is at hand.”

## II. HIS OFFICE.

The Jews were evidently not in a fit state to receive their Messiah.

There needed to be a moral reformation.

They needed to be stripped of their pride and self-righteousness.

While discontented and murmuring under deserved chastisement, they were unfit to hail Messiah.

Expected immediate fulfilment of promises of good made in the latter portion of Isaiah's prophecy.

In their disappointment they charged God with unfaithfulness.



But the charge retorted, by showing that "comfort" for Jerusalem must be preceded by a preparation of Messiah's way. Is. xl. 1—4.

There must be repentance on man's part, to insure mercy on God's.

He delays His coming in order that there may be time for repentance.

The same proclamation still made.

The heart must be prepared for Christ to take possession of it.

### III. THE RESULT OF THE EXERCISE OF HIS OFFICE.

Two classes to whom this language addressed.

(1). The murmurers who said "Where is the God of judgment."

Though practical infidels, they professed great zeal for God.

Professed to seek the Lord and to delight in His messenger.

To these the prophet says *text*, and adds v. 2.

What they so earnestly desired should only prove a terrible calamity. Amos. v. 18.

Solemn words!—written for our learning.

In vain we urge you to repent.

In vain God appeals to you by mercies and judgments.

Like Felix you tremble, but then grow more hardened.

Take heed lest the Lord come to His temple and find it only "a den of thieves."

(2). The patient waiters for the consolation of Israel.

Though He delayed, they still clung to His promise.

Trust many such here.





